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The Kingdom of Christ

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The Kingdom of Christ

A Series of Ten Lectures

By

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J. WILLIAM TERRY

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To the memory of

MY FATHER

who was a faithful minister of Jesus Christ,

And to MY MOTHER

to whom I owe much because of her life of self-sacrificing
service,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

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PREFACE

These lectures are not an effort to restate or expound any system of theology. They are not technical, being written for the lay rather than professional student. They are an attempt to put into a language which is free from the terminology of the theologian certain truths which the author believes to be the fundamental teachings of Jesus about His Kingdom.

There is no attempt to set forth anything new; but rather to expound and illustrate in a popular way certain phases of the thought of more recent years concerning these matters which have been dealt with almost exclusively in a technical manner.

The illustrations are not scriptural in themselves, but are used in an attempt to make clear certain teachings of the Scriptures. It would be unsafe to build into a system of theology such phrases as the "Magna Charta"—or "Constitution of The Kingdom." They are not scriptural; but the author believes that they will serve well to illustrate some very vital teachings of the Master.

In short, these lectures seek to help some of the laity to a better understanding of some of the modern problems that concern the spiritual side of the Christian fundamentals.

There have been those, where these lectures have been delivered, who have objected that they were weak in that they deal too largely with the spiritual interpretations of the teachings of Jesus, ignoring their practical applications, such as the social side of Christ's gospel, the Kingdom on earth, etc. We must not forget that the Kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom.

The social application of the Gospel is the outgrowth of spiritual life. The Kingdom comes to Earth because the Kingdom first comes to the Heart. The spiritual is first, the practical application its outcome. These lectures are an effort to deal with first things.

It is the prayer of the author that this volume may help some to a clearer understanding of the purport of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of Christ

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

I believe in the Fatherhood of God and in the Brotherhood of man.

By the Fatherhood of God I mean that God is the Father of all, not only of the righteous but of the unrighteous as well. He is the Father of those who belong to the Kingdom of Christ, also of those who know nothing of the gospel and of those who know, but refuse to hear and answer the gospel's call. If, then, God is the Father of all, all men are brothers, not only those that are bound by the kinship of a common faith but *all* men, of whatever faith they may be, men of all races, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the moral and the immoral.

The statement of the fact of the Fatherhood of God and of the Brotherhood of man as a doctrine of theology is new. But while the theology of the past has not recognized it, we have known it instinctively for a long while. Although the church has taught doctrines that were, in many instances, essentially contrary to the doctrine of God's universal Fatherhood and the universal Brotherhood of men, both those of the pew and the pulpit have instinctively felt that to which they had not learned to give their intellectual assent. In matters of religion, as well as in other branches of life, as we

shall discover in a later lecture, this instinctive or experimental knowledge is of superior authority to and an inevitable forerunner of a definite intellectual recognition. We are coming speedily to an intellectual acceptance of the fact of the Fatherhood of God and of the Brotherhood of man, and the time is not far off when it will be an authentic part of the creeds of orthodoxy. But it will not be new to the great mass of Christendom, for experimentally we have known it for a long time.

Let us argue from the experimental to the intellectual in this matter.

When a child is born, it either belongs to God or to the Devil. The old theologian with his theory of the child "conceived and born in sin" could not consistently consider the new-born babe other than a child of the devil. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that in the first hours of the child's life it was hurried to the altar of the church for baptism, that through that ordinance it might enter into covenant relations with Christ and thereby become an adopted child of God. The old theologian was consistent with his own theology when he supposed Hell to be paved with the bodies of unbaptized babies, for if a child does not belong to God when it is born then it does belong to the devil.

I greatly doubt, however, if any mother, no matter what her theology may be, can hold her new-born babe close to her breast and, feeling the flutter of its little heart, really feel that *her* child is born belonging to the devil, only to be adopted into the family of God through the provisions of a hard and unnatural atonement.

Those who are nearest the inner shrine at the time of child-birth, when the mother goes so far down into the valley to come up again to a joy that she alone can understand, when the mysterious glory of new life

bound up in this bit of flesh is ushered into the world, cannot help but feel that it is a time when God is peculiarly manifesting Himself. There are none, I am sure, who will go out of a birth-chamber *feeling* that the new life that has come into the world belongs to the devil until, under some very mechanical and legal provisions of the Omnipotent, the child can be adopted into the family of God.

Whatever logical theory we may construct, from a purely theological standpoint, will be, in fact, I believe always has been, denied by the truer instincts of our inner consciousness. Mother and Father, you will not admit that *your* child was, when born, a child of the devil. If not yours neither was your neighbor's.

If, then, the child belongs to God when it is born, when does it cease to belong to Him? Is it when the child reaches the age when it can choose for itself, and then makes a choice against God and Christ's Kingdom; or is it when in later years it disobeys the laws of God, rejects His love and cuts itself off from Him?

Let us consider the laws of parenthood. Father and Mother, when your children become disobedient and refuse to obey parental authority, and you find that you can no longer draw them by the great force of parental love, when they leave the home rooftree and drift from you into the world of evil, do you say, "You are no longer a child of mine; I hereby renounce all kinship; you are but as a stranger to me"? Not if you are a true parent. If by any chance you are so unnatural a father or mother as to thus cast off your child, your sin is deeper than theirs.

God is a perfect parent. When your child forsakes you, your love still calls out after it, the wayward one, *your child*. For it is always, obedient and loving, or sinning and wayward, always *your child*.

Some one objects that there is a difference between the relationships of earthly parents and those of the Heavenly Parent. The only difference, of which I know, is that the earthly parent's relationship is more or less imperfect while the relationships of the Heavenly Parent are always perfect. All will agree that the parable of The Prodigal Son illustrates the relationship between God, as Father, and man, as son.

In this parable, you will remember that, although the youngest son took his heritage, and leaving his father's roof-tree went into the far country, there to spend his all in riotous living, he was all the while his father's son. And, if you please, the son that remained at home with the father was always his brother. I have no doubt but that in the close of this parable the Master meant to rebuke unbrotherliness. The parable is not only the parable of "The Prodigal Son" but also the parable of "The Unbrotherliness of the Elder Brother." If the elder brother had possessed the true spirit of brotherliness he would have journeyed into the far country to find his brother and bring him home. To me, it is very clear that in this parable the Master teaches that God is the Father of the wayward and erring as well as of the loving and obedient, and that the fallen brother is our brother in just as true a sense as the obedient brother who dwells with us under our Father's home roof.

Moreover, the doctrine that we are not natural children of God, but only heirs by adoption, destroys much of the most sacred relationship that could exist between God and man, for the relationship of an adopted son can never be as perfect as can that of those who are natural heirs.

When I say that God is the Father of all, I do not

mean to say that he deals the same with all of His children. I do not mean that the wayward, on one hand, and the loving and faithful on the other, receive from Him the same abundance of divine blessing and an equal measure of fatherly care. I do not mean to say that the gifts of God are bestowed as freely upon the unrighteous as they are upon the righteous. The younger son could not enjoy the comforts of the Father's house while living a fast life in the "far country." He had cut himself off from the bounty of his father's household; how then could he enjoy the blessings of his father's wealth? It is so with those who cut themselves away from the Heavenly Father's love and care. They have refused to take from their Father's hand the gift of eternal life and are away from Him, lost in the sin of the world.

Now the Father's family is divided, it is *the* great tragedy, divided into two Kingdoms. First, the Kingdom which is ruled by the Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, which is the Kingdom of righteousness. It is through this Kingdom that the obedient ones gain eternal life. Then there is the Kingdom whose citizenship is made up of the disobedient, of those who refuse to swear allegiance to Christ as King. This is the Kingdom of the world. Because those who are citizens in this Kingdom refuse to crown Christ King of their lives, because they refuse the love and obedience they owe God as their Father, they cannot enter into the rich joys of the Father's bounty nor inherit eternal life.

Thus we see that, when rightly understood, the fact of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man does not belittle sin nor establish a Universal salvation. We have, however, that which, in the understanding of the Divine relationship toward us and our

relationship toward one another, will eventually solve the world's most difficult problems and go far toward bringing all the world into the Kingdom of Christ.

It is the fact of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man that makes possible the missionary propaganda. As the world understands these great facts better, the missionary fervor will grow. It is difficult to understand how we, with the idea that all who were not brought into immediate relationship with God through covenant relationship with Christ were not children of His, could fervently support the missionary programme. If the millions of China and Africa, if those in far-away India, Korea and the dwellers on the Islands of the Sea are not children of God, not our brothers, why the passion to reach and save them? If they are of some other family than God's family why should we disturb them? God is not a proselyter. He does not desire to steal from another's household. He wants only those who belong to Him. But those of the far-away lands are His children. He is their Father. They belong to His household; the black man, the yellow man, the red man as well as the white man are children of His. Many of them do not know it; they cannot enjoy the benefits of such relationship, for they have never been told of it, but it is our duty, we who are their brothers, to tell them. The passion to tell them does not come, in fact, never could come, from a desire to proselyte into His family from without. The passion does not come to save the stranger, who is lost, but a brother.

A fuller understanding of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man will deepen within us a genuine passion for the souls of those who are round about us. If it had not been for the true instinct that

taught us experimentally of this Fatherhood and Brotherhood, in spite of the false teachings of the theologians, we would never have experienced a true passion for the souls of others.

If the wretched drunkard, the scarlet woman and the ruined gambler are strangers, if they are members of the household of Satan, why should we have so earnest a desire to bring them to a different life? If they are children of the devil, let them go. What do we care? They are no kin of ours. If the man, whose greed and lust for the material blinds him to the things that are worth while, is a child of the devil, why should he interest us? If, because of his greed, he becomes hard and vicious, if he steals from the widows and robs the orphans, if he oppresses the weak and thereby loses his own soul, why should we care? He is no kin of ours, he is only a child of the devil. Why should I try to save him? I am my brother's keeper, but God never made me keeper of the children of the devil. Ah, but this man is not a child of the devil; he is a child of God and, therefore, my brother!

The drunkard, the woman of the street, and the men and the women who are losing their souls because of their love of worldliness and lust for things material, are all children of God and our brothers and sisters, and the bond of kinship gives us a passion for their salvation.

It will only be when we understand that God is the Father of all mankind, and that all men are brothers, that we will be in real earnest about purging the earth of its great institutions of vice. Only when we understand that the poor creature, who is damned soul and body in the brothel, is our sister, will we rise up in our might and annihilate the White Slave traffic. Not until we

understand that the man who is being wrecked by the liquor habit is our brother, will we, in righteous indignation, wipe the liquor traffic from the earth. We will give our best energies out in battle for the protection of our own kin, but not for those of another's household.

An understanding of the Universal Brotherhood of man will be the only basis for the solution of our economic and sociological difficulties. When the capitalist understands that the laboring man is his brother, and when the laboring man understands that the capitalist is his brother, then the labor warfare will be near an end. The capitalist will adjust the many injustices that he has perpetrated, and each will live to serve the other; for they will no longer be strangers and enemies, but kinsmen, brothers.

When the vision of the Universal Brotherhood has become sufficiently clear to us we will be on the high-road to universal peace. Nation may war with nation if they look upon each other as nations only. Race will hate race if all they understand is the fact that they are members of different races. Brother, however, will much less war with brother. And surely when we comprehend the fact of Universal Brotherhood, Christian nations will refuse to war, not only with the Christian nation but with the non-Christian nation as well, for we are all brethren.

The vision of the Universal Brotherhood, when clearly understood, will solve the problems that arise from race hatred. When we know that the black, the yellow and the red man is as much our brother as the white man we will forget, in a large degree, the difference in race, for such things count but little among brothers. As we individually understand more perfectly the truth of the

Brotherhood of man, we will discover that the race hatred that we have felt, often much against our wills, to be a part of our nature, is disappearing, and brotherly love springing up in its place.

All this is not too much to claim for a proper understanding of the fact that God is the Universal Father and that all men are brothers, for there is no bond like the bond of kinship. There is no greater force than the impelling love between parent and child and between brother and brother. If a husband turn traitor to his wife she can separate herself from him and be a stranger to him. She was a stranger to him once, she can be a stranger to him again. If a wife is unfaithful to her husband he may cut her off and be a stranger to her. He was a stranger to her once, he can be a stranger to her again. A mother, however, was never a stranger to her son, a man was never a stranger to his brother. They, therefore, never can be strangers to each other. No matter how deep they may sin, no matter how they may disregard the demands of the relationship, they cannot be strangers for they are kinsmen, and to refuse to accept the responsibilities of that kinship is to sin very deeply. The fact that our brothers may deny the relationship and refuse to be bound by it, will not lessen our responsibility in the matter, for we are our brothers' keepers and nothing can sever the bonds of kinship.

The same law holds good in the spiritual relationship. God is the Father of all, and must recognize the relationship toward all mankind. There can be no doubt that God is true to the requirements of the divine kinship; any failure is always upon our part, God's love is always the same. His love for a sinning world was so great that He "gave His only begotten Son" to live and die for us. This is the greatest manifestation of love that

God can give to man. God recognizes the bond of parenthood that makes Him the loving Father of all the family, obedient and disobedient.

It is our duty, we who recognize the divine relationship of God and are citizens of Christ's Kingdom, to recognize our bond of kinship with all the world whether others recognize the relationship or not. There are many nations who have not yet heard our gospel and many within the reach of our own churches who know nothing of the world's kinship; and there are thousands more who know of it but refuse to recognize it. But whether they know of it and refuse to recognize it or do not know of it we, who know, are bound by the sacred chords of this kinship and by all of its holy responsibilities. We are our brothers' keepers, and all men are our brothers.

God speed the day when the great fact of the Universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man is universally understood. Then thousands who are away from the Father's house will come back, and many who now refuse to hear His call will cry to Him for forgiveness. For those who will sin against a God who is the Father of the righteous only will repent when they know that they are sinning against their own loving Father.

When the Christian folk understand more perfectly the truth of this great doctrine with which we are dealing, they will take upon themselves sacred responsibilities in such a way as to bring marvelous things to pass. They will rise up to make the most Christlike sacrifices to carry the gospel to our brethren in Africa and China, Japan, Korea, India and the Isles of the Sea. I know that some are making mighty sacrifices to that end today, but when the day is come that all Chris-

tendom understands that foreign mission work is but taking the gospel to those of our own family, the vision of the old hymn will be fulfilled, for they shall "seek the Savior's blessing, a nation in a day."

We shall, in the day when we fully comprehend the true scope of our Father's family, see the great social problems moving toward a speedy solution, for our ideal, as Christians, will be more and more true service, because it will be service to our own kinsmen. *We* will then see the church wielding a truly great influence over the great masses that today they cannot reach, largely because they (the church) refuse to consider the masses outside as belonging to their family. We will put forth such efforts as we have not even approached in the past to wipe out the curses that drag our brothers down. Nation will no longer war with nation, and race hatred will die out in the hearts of man. For we are kinsmen, and the spirit of loving service is the only right relationship between brother and brother.

All this will not come to pass in a day. Many will refuse to recognize this kinship and many who do recognize it will refuse to be controlled by it, but ultimately love will prevail. Therefore, God haste the day when we shall fully understand the truth of the Universal Fatherland of God and Brotherhood of man.

THE ATONEMENT

Marvelous as is our ability to express great truths through the medium of language, there are certain facts that transcend the limits of rhetoric. No language can be builded that will convey them. We can name the facts, and comprehend something of them in our experience, but we cannot build an explanation of them into words. Some things can be expressed in words, others only in life.

There are some truths that we can understand without great difficulty and others that it takes a lifetime of study to comprehend. There are yet other truths that students have struggled to fathom for many generations and we do not yet comprehend them; but we shall master them some time. There are other truths so in the realm of the infinite that it takes the study of eternity to grasp them; we battle to discover them and are amazed as their wonders unfold to us. And while we comprehend them better from year to year and from generation to generation, there is always more to know about them. Their ultimate solution transcends the comprehension of the finite.

The central fact of the Christian religion, *The Atonement*, is a fact so great that no language can be builded that can explain it. We can only know it as it unfolds in our experience; we can only find it in life. Taken altogether, it is a fact that so far transcends our finite grasp that after we have comprehended all of it that we are capable of grasping after all these centuries of trying to understand, we must say, "The half has never yet been told."

Christ had a message that He could not deliver in

words, for words could not express it, so He delivered it by a life of sacrifice, and by His death upon the cross. This message is of such great power that it will bring a sinful and alienated world out of their sins and back to God. It is a message that will always be the greatest fact in the world, and yet eternity alone will tell it all.

The theologian has foolishly been trying to do that which Christ never attempted. He has been trying to explain the necessity of Christ's life and death, and to build into a creed this explanation, or theory of the atonement. If Christ could not put it into words how can we expect to do it? I recognize the fact that we can have no truly Christian theology other than that based upon the fact of the atonement. But why not recognize the fact that the atonement transcends language, that it is known only in experience and in its entirety can be comprehended only in eternity.

Every attempt that has been made to explain the fact of the atonement, every theory of the atonement that has been builded has been so much false work that has kept the seeker away from the great fact itself. Whenever we think that we understand the fact of the atonement, we stop that far short of the truth and are satisfied with infinitely less than the whole truth. If we are satisfied with a theological statement of the atonement, we lose the most vital part of Christ's message to us.

It is true that every theory of the atonement contains an element of truth. But a part truth is sometimes very harmful. Let us consider in as brief and simple a way as possible certain theories of the atonement that have been most generally accepted by the theologians of the different ages, and see where they fall short, that we may clear away the false work and catch a clearer vision of the great fact itself.

It is almost certain that the early church had no theory of the atonement. The language the Apostles used to express the fact of the atonement was often in the figure of the Hebrew idea of a literal blood atonement. But this language was used only to symbolize a vital fact. The Hebrew's literal blood sacrificial system was in a large part responsible for the Jews losing their vision of a spiritual religion and drifting into a religion of form only.

In the beginning, the forms of temple worship were given to a race of children that could be taught only by pictures. Therefore, they must have pictures to teach them of the heinousness of sin and of the willingness of God to forgive. However, after a time they fell in the same pit that has been the snare in the religious life of so many since, they took the symbols in place of that which they symbolized, the form for the fact. Thus, to the Jew, forgiveness of sin became possible through a blood sacrifice rather than true heart repentance and the mercy of Jehovah. Sin lost its terror, for it was so easily remitted.

Literal blood sacrifice has never been really essential for the forgiveness of sin, in fact, its only value was that of a symbol. Isaiah understood this and expressed it in Isaiah, fifty-eighth chapter. Micah states it clearly in the sixth chapter of his prophecy:

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

"He hath shewed thee, Oh man, what is good;

and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The Jews held so tenaciously to the form that they lost sight of the spirit and their religion grew to be one entirely of form. Notwithstanding this fact, theologians have attempted to drag much of the Hebrew theology over into the Christian. In the face of the Master's teaching to the contrary they have tried to put new wine into old bottles. So that, to a greater or less degree, the basis upon which most of the theories of the atonement have been builded, is that Christ became the sacrifice for all sin that there need no longer be a sacrifice offered for each individual sin; that He fulfilled the old law, and was so great a sacrifice that the world needs no other sacrifice.

Practically the first formulated theory of the atonement was what we call "the trick theory." It was that God had contracted with the devil as follows: The souls of those who sinned were to belong to the devil while the souls of those who were without sin were to belong to God. However, it developed that all men would sin, therefore, according to the agreement the devil would claim every soul. When many called upon God for forgiveness, and He, in His loving kindness, desired to grant their plea, He was unable to do so because of the agreement with the devil. To circumvent this agreement God made a treaty with the devil that He (God) should purchase back the souls of all who repented of their sins by giving the devil His son Jesus Christ.

Therefore, God sent His Son to earth to die upon the cross and then to descend into Hell and thus pay the price for the repentant souls, and at the same time satisfy the demands of the devil. When the Satanic

majesty agreed to this, he had thought that he could keep Christ when He descended into Hell, but because God had more power than the devil, Hell could not hold Jesus. He, therefore, "Rose again from the dead, and ascended into Heaven." God having known that the devil could not keep Christ, had tricked him (the devil) to *free* Himself (God) from the first agreement. Thus, according to this theory, God tricked the devil.

It is very clear to us now that such a theory comes very far from the truth. We know that the character of God is such that it would be impossible for Him to deal so unethically even with the devil. It would be entirely superfluous to take time here to disprove the "trick theory." We can easily see that it failed in the attempt to explain the atonement.

The next theory is known as the "satisfaction theory." It is, in substance, something like this: God was angry with men because of their sins, "Repenting that He made man." And in His anger would have cut them off from Him because of their sins. However, Christ, because of His love for the world, came to earth that He might live and die to propitiate the anger of God, and returning to Heaven be our advocate, standing before the Father's throne, showing His wounded hand and pierced side; and thus reconciling an angry God to a sinful world.

There are some who still believe this theory. It can be supported, as can any of the other theories, for that matter, by taking a verse of scripture, here and there and using them apart from their setting. Those who have believed the "satisfaction theory" overlooked the fact that there was such a truth as the one proclaimed in the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John: "For God so *loved* (not hated) the world that He *gave*

His only begotten Son." Not a loving Son coming to appease an angry God, but a loving God *giving* His own Son.

It would be hard to love a God who was angry with men and would forgive them only because of the petitions of a Son who claimed the right to be heard because of the great sacrifice He had made. The "sacrificial theory" of the atonement is a slander against the character of God.

The theory that is most generally accepted today is known as the "governmental, or substitution theory." Briefly, it is this: God made a law that the soul that sinned should surely die. Later when man had sinned and then cried to Him for forgiveness, God was willing to save the sinner from death, but He was bound by His own law and could not.

To satisfy the demands of His own law and uphold His government, and at the same time save the repenting sinner, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be sin in our stead, and to die for our sins. He (Christ) was punished, the innocent for the guilty.

There are several objections to be raised to this theory.

In the first place, we will hardly say that God did not know that men would sin and afterward repent of their sins before He made the law that the sinner should die. Now, if He did know, why did He bind Himself by such a law? Or in making the law why did He not make some provision for the release of the soul that repented of its sins? This objection is answered, that if He had made such a provision we would not have understood the terribleness of sin. This objection will not hold, for surely the law that those who sinned and did not repent would die, would be as effective as the law that all who sinned would die, when it is understood

that there is a provision through the atonement whereby the repentant escape. Moreover, the fact is that the soul that sins does die and must be born again before it lives.

Again, I fail to understand how Christ can become sin in our stead, or how His physical death upon the cross will satisfy the law that demands spiritual death as the penalty for sin.

Then, vicarious punishment is neither just nor necessary. God could not be a true Father if He punished the innocent for the guilty nor can I understand how His government makes it necessary. I have an illustration that I believe to be perfectly fair:

A certain father had two sons. To these sons he made a law that the son who was disobedient should surely be punished. The younger son disobeyed, but afterward repented and plead for forgiveness. The father declared his willingness to forgive but said: "I cannot forgive, for my parental government must be upheld, I have said that the son who was disobedient must suffer punishment, therefore, to uphold my authority I must punish you."

But the elder son, who has always been obedient, pleads:

"Father, punish me in his stead."

So the father, to uphold his parental authority, punishes the innocent son for the disobedience of the guilty one. This would be wrong: first, because parental government would not demand it. Secondly, it would be unjust that the innocent (even when willing) should be punished for the guilty.

Dr. Reginald Campbell is right when he says: "Nowhere in the world is there such a thing as vicarious punishment, but the law of nature is vicarious suffering."

The innocent mother suffers for the guilty son, the innocent wife for the guilty husband, but they are not punished in their stead.

While the "governmental theory" contains more elements of truth than the other theories that we have discussed it is far short of containing the true explanation of the atonement.

There are other theories of the atonement than these that we have considered, but they are all more or less outgrowths of them and are fully as inadequate to explain the great fact.

I have said that the fact of the atonement, because of its transcending greatness, could not be builded into any creed or explained by any theological theory. I will, therefore, refrain from making the blunder of trying to build a theory of my own. It is my purpose to consider briefly the great fact itself and some of its effects upon the generations since Christ was crucified, and its work in the hearts of men today; that perhaps we may understand a little more of what the atonement means in human history as the central fact of the Christian faith, and perhaps find in it some new message for ourselves.

It has always been the great task of God to reveal Himself to men for only as men know God, do they have life. It has been God's supreme desire that men might understand His love for them, for only through an understanding of His love will men be drawn to Him.

Since it is the supreme task of the Almighty to reveal Himself to men, that they might have life through knowing Him and growing into His likeness, He has put forth His best efforts to make men know Him. As we will see in the seventh lecture of this series, there is to be seen everywhere and in all ages the record of this

effort of God to reveal Himself. This record is most clearly seen on the pages of Holy writ.

The author of the book of Hebrews says:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets."

We find all through the Old Testament how God attempted to reveal Himself to the world through the medium of the prophets, and in many ways he succeeded. Yet there was much concerning God that the prophets could not understand, and in many things God failed in His effort to reveal Himself to and through them. The prophets could not understand all, for so much was beyond their comprehension. These facts concerning God were infinite facts. How then could the prophets who were finite understand these things which were infinite when they were spoken to them in the language of the infinite? Therefore, in a large degree, God failed in His efforts to reveal Himself through the prophets, since they were finite and He, the infinite, must speak to them in the language of the infinite.

God could not reveal Himself directly to the hearts of men for the same reason that He could not reveal Himself to the prophets, because the finite cannot understand the language of the infinite. God, therefore, found it necessary to combine the infinite and the finite as the only way to put His message in a form that could be understood by man.

He clothed His infinite nature in flesh, and came to earth to live and die as a man, that by this means He might reveal Himself to men. John so well expressed it in the opening words of his gospel when he says: "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten

of the Father." The author of the book of Hebrews states the same fact, continuing after the words quoted before, that God who spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things "

Thus, we see that, in Christ, God accomplished His supreme task of revealing Himself to the world. That which He could not reveal directly to the hearts of men, nor yet through prophets, He succeeded in revealing in the life and death of Christ.

I have this simple illustration :

I was at one time employed as a telegraph operator. The telegraph instrument responds much more to the human touch than those who are not familiar with it can understand. I think I can tell, with no other knowledge than that which the sounder of the telegraph affords, whether the operator working on the wire is a man or woman, whether they are young or old, and if I work with them for a little time I will know whether they are of a kindly or an irritable disposition. In fact, with no other acquaintance than that which I can form over the telegraph wire, I come to the place where I feel that I know the other operator quite well.

Suppose that after some years of this sort of wire acquaintance this operator should some day walk into my office and introduce himself, and we should shake hands and have a few minutes of personal conversation, I would know that operator better after those few minutes of personal conversation after I had touched his hand and looked into his face than I could know him after years of wire acquaintance.

For some years I carried on a correspondence with a man that I had never met. Through that correspondence and through reading some of his writings I felt

that I had a personal acquaintance with him. One day I had occasion to ride a few miles with that man on the train and I discovered that in even so short an association I could know him in a way that I could not after years of long-distance acquaintanceship.

Through the prophets, who knew much of God, through nature, where God writes of Himself in a myriad of ways we may learn of Him and have a long distance acquaintance with Him. But the only way that we can really know Him is in the personal contact; and the way that God found to come into personal contact with men so that they could understand, was to make the Word flesh and dwell on earth as a man. Thus, in Jesus Christ, God reveals Himself to man.

By far the major part of God's revelation is the revelation of His *love*, for it is by love that He draws a sinful and alien world back to Himself. It is by His love that He inspires obedience and self-sacrificing service from those who call Him Father. It is not by the power nor the wisdom of God that a sinful world will be made righteous, and an alien world will be brought back to Him, it is not by the power of His might that men will come to love Him but rather by the power of His love.

The world will be drawn to God only as the world understands God's love for it. You and I are drawn to Him only as we comprehend somewhat of His love for us. For no matter how great God's love may be, it means nothing to those whom He loves until they know of the love. So God's great effort in revealing Himself is to teach men of His love for them.

You will remember the old Scotchman in "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," who had a great love for his daughter, but did not know how to show it. And she, poor

motherless child, felt that she was alone in the world, robbed of a mother and knowing nothing of the love of her father. For what is the world without love? And because of her lonesomeness and her misunderstanding of her father she ran away to London. Then, when the father realized how he had failed in manifesting his love and a good woman of the parish had persuaded him to reveal to his daughter his love for her by sending for her to come home, she came back to him, drawn by the love that she had never known of before. How glad indeed was the poor bruised heart of the child when, returning, she found that other manifestation of her father's love, the light in the window. The father had always loved the daughter, but had lost her because he had failed in revealing his love. And it was in the revelation of the love that he had always felt that he not only brought her back, but gained that which he had never possessed before, the fullness of his daughter's love. And the daughter had gained that which she needed the most, a loving father. As it was the manifestation of the father's love that brought her back and gave her her father, so is it the *manifestation* of the love of God that will bring a world back to Himself and give to it a loving Father.

God has not been constantly saying to the world in the language of men, "I love you! I love you!" If He had so desired, He could have written on the tables of stone with the decalogue, "I love the world." He might have written it in the clouds in the sky by day and in letters of fire in the sky by night. The Bible might contain on every page the statement of God to men, "I love you." But had He done this, men would not have believed it. They would have said, "How do we know?" It is an easy matter to say "I

love you" when it is not true. Then, again, God might not have meant the same thing when He said "love" that we mean when we say love. The bare statement of the fact that we love is never enough. The statement from God that He loved the world would not have been enough.

We know that a mother loves her child, not because she says that she does, but because through constant sacrifice in service, because of her keen suffering for the child's wrongs and because of her constant care for it when it suffers, because of her supreme faith when all others have turned against her child, because of these things we know that a mother loves her child.

We know of the love of God for us because of the sacrifice on the cross. Christ might have come to earth and delivered the same verbal message that He did deliver, perform the same miracles that He performed, and after this if He had died a natural death He would have meant no more to the world than a great teacher. But because, coupled with the sacrificial service of His life, we have the supreme sacrifice of the cross, we find in Him God; we find in Him the highest revelation of God; we understand through the cross, as we could understand in no other way, something of what the love of God for a lost world truly is. And seeing God's love thus manifested we cannot say no to His appeal, we cannot turn away when He calls. A lost world could say no to a God whose chief attribute is power or wisdom, but understanding the cross they cannot say no to a God whose chief attribute is so supreme a love. Thus by the impelling power of love are we drawn to Him. In this we understand what the Master meant when He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me."

Just why it is so I do not attempt to say; why it could not have been otherwise I can only partly understand; what all it means to the world no tongue nor pen can ever tell. Sufficient that it is so. We know that the cross has dominated the world's history for the past two thousand years. The cross has been the greatest power for uplift that the world has ever known. When we look upon the cross and listen for the message that it has for us, we find that which unspeakably transcends the highest ideals found elsewhere in all the world. If we walk close with God we will find that it was the cross that drew us there. We find that when we are away from Him that it is the cross that calls us back. The world without the cross is a world without our God of Love.

When we suffer we know that He understands, when we are tempted we know that He was tempted, when we are bruised and broken we know that He cares, for He went through the valley of the shadow. We can find in Him that which we can find nowhere else. It is all made real to us, I cannot understand just how, but I know that it is so; it is all made real to us through the cross.

The cross is the central fact of the Christian faith. Rob the Christian of the cross and you take from him his vision, his Savior, and His loving father. Indeed you leave him very little that is worth while. But you cannot rob the Christian of the cross; he will not let it go, to him it is light, it is life. That which was the darkest hour of history, when the sun was darkened, when the earth trembled, when the dead came from their graves, when the veil of the temple was rent in twain, when the Son of God died, has become the

great light of a sinful world and is the dawn of eternal life for many souls that were lost.

“When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

KING CHRIST AND HIS MAGNA CHARTA

The Jew's great hope was the expected coming of the Messiah to establish His Messianic Kingdom. This was right, and as the Almighty intended that it should be. The failure of the Jews to accept the Messiah and to seek citizenship in His Kingdom when He came, was due to the fact that their vision was not broad enough to comprehend the extent of the Kingdom over which He would reign.

The Jews did not reject Christ because He brought to them less than they had expected, but because He brought to them more than they looked for. It has never been that we have rejected our prophets because they came to us with less than we expected, but we have refused to receive them because their message has exceeded our vision. The Jews looked forward to a Messianic Kingdom and then rejected Christ because His Kingdom was mightier than the one for which they looked.

They looked for a leader who would not only free the Jewish temporal Kingdom from the bondage of Rome, but would also become so forceful a leader as to subdue the whole world and, by force, proselyte them into the Jewish Kingdom.

We have many reasons to believe that Christ, had He been willing to lay aside His greater mission, could have fulfilled the Jews' expectation. There are those who hold to the belief that Christ had a right to the Jewish throne, that He was the Heir Proper of the royal line of The House of David. It is claimed that this is the reason that Herod was afraid of Him and attempted His life when He was a babe at Bethlehem.

It is argued that Herod would not have dared to attempt the life of one whom He thought to be the expected Messiah, that, therefore, his jealousy was for one whom he knew had a right to the temporal throne of the Jew.

Whether this be true or not, several events in the life of the Master show us that if He had given His consent that He could have been proclaimed King by the Jewish masses. The political conditions throughout the world at that time were such that it is not a wild fancy to imagine, that one who was able to stir the religious zeal of the Hebrew people into a frenzy, a people so docile when acting from other motives and so mighty when stirred by a religious impulse, and one who could at the same time command the military respect of certain other peoples who were enemies of Rome but lacked the leadership for a revolt, could literally have conquered the world and established a temporal kingdom stronger than any that the world has ever known. There is little doubt that Christ could have fulfilled the Jews' Messianic hope if He had been willing to lay aside the mission of establishing the Greater Kingdom.

Never once, however, did the Master swerve from His conquest to establish the true Heavenly Kingdom. They tried to make Him an earthly King and He refused. They tried to heap upon Him the honors due a temporal ruler and He turned from them. Yet He told them that He was a King; and when they asked Him about His kingdom He told them that it was "within them." Because they did not understand how much greater His kingdom was than that which they had expected, they refused to receive Him.

Because the Jew refused to receive Christ did not

mean that His kingdom failed. In face of all opposition He fulfilled His mission on earth. He laid the foundations of His Kingdom in the two years of His ministry on earth and then went into the spiritual realm to rule over His spiritual Kingdom. The vital fact to understand concerning this Kingdom is the fact that it is a *spiritual kingdom*.

I say that in His two years of ministry here He laid the foundations of His spiritual kingdom. This He accomplished by delivering to the world His Magna Charta or Declaration of Independence from certain things that enslaved, liberating the intellects, the conscience and the souls of men from the things that were holding them in bondage, that all who would might be free.

He gave the world not only His Magna Charta, but also a constitution for His new Kingdom, that once freed from the things which had held them in bondage men might enjoy a citizenship in a Kingdom of free men.

Let us give considerations to the Magna Charta.

In the first place, He declared His Kingdom to be Universal. The Jews believed that the Kingdom of God was bound up within the Jewish nation. They believed that entrance to the Kingdom could be gained only through the gates of Judaism, and that one became acceptable to God only after he was circumcised and had conformed to the laws of Moses and to the traditions of the elders. Christ declared that the Kingdom was not confined to the limits of the Jewish Hierarchy, but embraced the Gentile as well as the Jew, and that a Greek or Samaritan could be in favor with God and a citizen of the Kingdom without first becoming a Jew.

We find the declaration of the Universality of the Kingdom in the record of the Master's dealings with the Syrophenician woman, as recorded in the seventh chapter of Mark's gospel. It doubtless has appeared to many that Jesus called the woman a dog. No explanation that can be imagined would justify this. A proper understanding, however, will make it evident that it must have been for the disciples a very forceful lesson of the scope of the Kingdom. The disciples, in common with all Jews, considered the Greeks as dogs. So that when the woman came near the Master calling upon Him to cast the devil from her daughter that the disciples must have rebuked her saying, "Stand back, you Greek dog!" The Master, seeing that the time was ripe to illustrate a great truth, said to the woman:

"Let the children first be filled, for it is *not* meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs."

Then, after the woman had proven her faith, (and Jesus required that both Jew and Gentile prove their faith) Jesus cast the unclean spirits from the woman's daughter. Now this healing was the bread, and the Master had declared that it was *not* meet to give the children's bread to the dogs. By the act of healing her daughter Jesus gave the woman bread, thus proving to the disciples and all those who hear of this event that the woman was not a dog but a child. He taught that the bread that He had to give was as much for the Greek woman of Syrophenicia as for the circumcised Jew, that the Kingdom was as accessible to the Gentile as it was to the Jew.

The fact of the universal scope of the Kingdom, and certain other points of the Magna Charta, are clearly illustrated in the manner that Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Sychar. To

understand this event we must understand three things: first, that she was a Samaritan; second, a woman, and, in the third place, that she was a harlot.

"Now, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Jew considered that the Samaritan had no favor with the Almighty since they worshipped Him after a fashion of their own, having their own temple, worshipping in their own holy mount (which was Gerizim and not Sinai), and refusing to hold sacred the ordinances of the Jew. The Jew, therefore, considered them blasphemers and unworthy of any association whatsoever. Therefore, the woman could not be other than greatly surprised when Christ, a Jew, spoke to her, a Samaritan.

Then the Jew considered it improper to give a woman public recognition. In face of all that has been said to the contrary, one cannot read the Old Testament without discovering that the Hebrew had no very high ideals concerning the dignity of womanhood. A Jew would no more think of greeting a woman in public than a Mohammedan will to-day. So we may well believe that this woman was surprised at this public greeting. That a Jew should take notice of a Samaritan was amazing; but that a Jew should publicly address a Samaritan *woman* was well nigh unbelievable. Moreover, she was a harlot, and the religious Jew was extremely careful to draw his garments about him that he might escape contamination from contact with those who were sinful. There was a very clear distinction with the Jews between those who were religious (after the fashion of the Pharisee) and those who were admittedly sinners; a distinction made clear by the fact that the churchman had no dealings with the publicans and sinners. In this con-

nection you will remember that there was very bitter criticism of Christ because He consented to eat with Publicans. Therefore, to the Pharisee, the religious Jew, it would seem a thing impossible that a Rabbi, that He who claimed to be the Messiah, should publicly address a harlot.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered that the Samaritan woman was greatly surprised that Jesus asked her for water, and the disciples must have been greatly amazed when they returned to find the Master offering this Samaritan harlot the water of everlasting life, which, as they believed, belonged only to the Jew. In the fact that the Master did offer this woman the water of everlasting life we find illustrated the salient points of the Magna Charta.

In the fact that she was a Samaritan we find that Jesus again teaches the Universality of His Kingdom. In it we find the truth that His Kingdom is free from the bonds of any ecclesiasticism. If the Kingdom of Jehovah had been confined to the Jewish nation, if the Holy Mount had been Sinai alone, and the temple of the living God only at Jerusalem, and if man could come into the Kingdom only by the observance of the ordinances of Moses, it was to be so no longer, for here was Christ offering citizenship in His Kingdom to a Samaritan without demanding that she first become a Jew. She could as easily have within her this "well of water springing up to everlasting life" as if she had conformed to all of the Jewish ordinances.

Here we have it—the Jews with their holy mount at Sinai; the Samaritans with their holy Mt. Gerizim; the Jews with their temple at Jerusalem; the Samaritans with their temple on Mt. Gerizim—both received the

offer of eternal life from Jesus, and the benefits to be derived from citizenship in His Kingdom were as much for the one as for the other. We see that it is not a matter of being a part of an ecclesiasticism; it is not what men dogmatically believe. Christ taught that the Kingdom of Christ was not a matter of church organization, nor yet a matter of theology or creed. As it was not essential then it is not essential now; it is not the organization to which one belongs nor the creed to which one gives assent but, as we shall see in the next lecture, a matter of inner life.

There is much said in these days concerning the emancipation of womanhood. Did it ever occur to you that the only real emancipator that woman has ever known was Jesus Christ? If we were to consider the status of women as found under every condition in every age, we should find that they have been held as free and equal with men only in the Christian era and in lands that are Christian, where the Protestant gospel is preached without hindrance. It will be entirely unnecessary for me to stop long to point out the fact that women were considered very far beneath men by all ancient religions. The Hebrew religion, which was by far the superior of all the ancient religions, gave very little consideration to the worth of a woman; a perusal of the Old Testament will prove this to be a fact. No Jew considered his mother or his wife to be his equal. When a male child was born in a Jewish home there was rejoicing; when the child was a girl there was keen disappointment. The Jewish women, however, held a position that was much higher than the women of any of the other peoples of that day.

Consider the standing of women in pagan lands to-day. Under Confucianism, in China we had the bound

foot. The wife is but the plaything of the husband. Conditions are growing better in China only under the influence of Christianity. Under the influence of the Koran and the rule of the crescent we have the Turkish Harem and a moral condition unspeakable. The home is violated, and all womanhood debased in the polygamist theories and practices of Mormonism of our own country.

Some one suggests that it is education that will give woman her rightful place and free us from the superstitions that have always made her a slave to man. A prominent archæologist declares that in his research he had discovered certain writings coming from Greece and Rome, in the palmiest days of art and philosophy in those countries, (days when these branches of education were at their best) so that if high education meant high ideals of womanhood then that should have been a time when woman came into her own. But these passages, he declared, are too vile for publication, and that he would not dare to utter them from the platform. To the Greek and the Roman a woman was not more than a plaything for men, she was in no real sense free. The nation's ideals concerning her were very low. Education of itself never has and never can spell emancipation for womanhood.

It is clear that women have never been free except where the gospel of Jesus Christ spreads its influence. Jesus Christ alone was the emancipator of womanhood. It is in the Christian lands that the name of mother stands above all names on earth. It is in the Christian religion that we find the demand for purity and for a system of ethics that will destroy the double standard. It is in the Christian lands that we realize the powerful influence of woman, and, instead of making her a moral slave, we give to her the highest of honors. To the

Christian there are no names more sacred than wife and mother, and there is no earthly influence held more sacred than that of the pure woman.

The woman that does not, in return for the emancipation that is hers through Jesus Christ, yield to Him her life, is in no way appreciative of the great freedom that is hers because of this Magna Charta of Christ's declaring freedom from the bonds of lust and of superstition.

The greatest article of the Magna Charta is illustrated in the fact that Jesus offered the water of life to the woman who was a harlot. Jesus Christ came to free men from the very worst of all slavery—*sin*. The religion of the Jew appealed much to the man who boasted of his own righteousness. While it is true that many of the characters of the Old Testament, like David, had been great sinners and repented of their sins, while it is true that certain of the prophets, notably Isaiah, had conceived the fact that God invited sinners back to Himself, we find that the major message of the Old Testament makes its appeal to the righteous man. The religion of the Pharisee had in it very little for the man who recognized himself to be a sinner. The Pharisee was always willing to cast the sinner into outer darkness. But no one can read the four gospels without realizing that Christ's major message was for the sinner. Since it is "the sick and not the whole that need a physician," He, the great Physician, came to heal the sick and to set free the sinner. As we study His life work we grow more and more to understand that His call was constantly to the wayward one. We learn that He came "to call sinners not the righteous to repentance."

As we look upon the work of the Gospel of Jesus through the centuries since He was on earth, we understand how truly it liberates from the power of sin. The

history of the Christian religion is that of "the sinner saved by grace." Men and nations have been lifted from the stagnation and death of sin to the power of a life of righteousness. Men and nations that have been bound by the shackles of sin have, as they felt the influence and power of the Gospel of Christ and have submitted themselves to it, found their shackles broken, and they who were once slaves are now free. China, which has for centuries been enslaved by a myriad of vices, a nation of resources, of favorable geographical location, of wealth, a nation of millions of inhabitants, a nation which might well be among the foremost nations of the earth, is stupified, enslaved by the sodden influences of such a vice as the opium traffic. Confucianism and Buddhism have manifested that they did not have the power to break the shackles of such sin.

In these last years since the Christian missionary has gone into China, we find that the nation is throwing off the shackles of her vices; and as the Christian influence penetrates into her darkness, little by little China is freed from its enslaving sins and we shall see her become a real world force taking her place among the foremost nations of the earth. I might illustrate the same with other nations that today are coming swiftly to the front because, by the freeing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are breaking away from the slavery of superstition and vice.

One of the foremost external evidences of the reality of the Christian religion is the fact that no man can say that he has not seen men, long slaves of sin, become free men by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, men who were slaves of the liquor habit, slaves to lusts of the flesh, slaves to lust for gold, men who did not live one moment of joy, but lived rather lives of misery,

of no service to themselves or the world because of their enslaving vices. We have seen such men as these become Christians and those who were once slaves go free. We have seen the man who was a drunkard become strong as a sober man, him who was a libertine, master of himself in his purity, and him who was a slave to miserliness become free in the joy of service to his fellowmen. And it is all because of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ which frees men from the bondage of sin.

There is one other form of slavery from which we are freed by the gospel of Christ that it will be well to mention. Christ came to free men from the despair that comes from sorrow. He did not come to free us from sorrow, for sorrow has a divine mission to those who are citizens of His Kingdom. But to the man who does not have within himself the eternal hope that is the rich possession of the Christian, for the man who does not have a vision that reaches far beyond the things of the present, for the man who does not have a vision of the victorious and eternal Kingdom, sorrow cannot bring other than bitter despair. Suffering can have no meaning which is of value to him whose life and hope are bound up in the present, and whose wealth consists of the temporal.

But to the Christian—well, the Master said, "Blessed are they that mourn." Although the problem of sorrow is yet a very deep mystery to us, we know that somehow, to those who live close to God and know the divine secrets of the Kingdom of Christ, sorrow brings a rich experience that could come no other way. We find that to the one whose life is saturated with the spirit of the Christ there is no other thing that so develops and refines the character as the influence of sorrow.

Necessarily, for the man whose all is here and now, whose wealth is in the things that are temporal, whose ambition is for power, and whose joys come to him through the sensations of the flesh and the pride of life, sorrow will rob of the things that seem worth while and leave nothing in their place. And to such a one after sorrow has come, life will become empty and he will become bitter in his despair.

To the one who lives not alone in the present but whose life is broad in the full expanse of Christ's Kingdom, and whose wealth consists of the things that are not temporal but eternal, to one who seeks a life more like the life of the Master, sorrow will bring that which is of infinite value. Although it may wound deeply, and although its pain be severe, in the end we will find that through it we have become richer. The author of Hebrews was right when he said "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."

Again, Paul is right when he says in Romans, "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

We know that the life of Christ means much to us because of His sufferings. Take from the gospels the record of the suffering of Christ, and what have you left? Some excellent ethics without the force of the divine life of suffering behind them. The force of the divine character of Christ came in the fact that He suffered. Paul and Steven loom up as great characters to us because they suffered. We love Peter more because of the story of the death that he died. Take from the

Christian gospel the message of suffering and you will find that you have robbed it of its most vital force.

Thus we see that to the man who has not the hope that those who are citizens of the Kingdom of Christ have sorrow can only be a robber and can bring nothing but despair; but to the Christian it gives a broader and fuller life. Christ, in His Magna Charta, freed us from the bondage of the despair of sorrow.

Jesus Christ gave to the world His Magna Charta that all who would fulfill His demands for citizenship in the Kingdom (demands that will be set forth in the next lecture) should be free; first, from bondage to ecclesiasticism and creeds. Not that the Master condemned ecclesiastical organizations and creeds, for He did not; but He taught that no organization was large enough to embrace all the Kingdom, that the Kingdom was so extensive in its scope that it could be bound only by the limits of infinity. He taught that no creed could infallibly state all the truth concerning the Kingdom. No man may say, "Lo, here is the Kingdom within the confines of this organization, here and here only. And Lo, here is the truth concerning the Kingdom in this creed, stated here and nowhere else." While the ecclesiastical organization and theology and the church creed have their legitimate place and functions, the Kingdom of Christ is bigger than all of them, and, therefore, cannot be limited by any of them.

Jesus came to set men free from the bondage of superstition, for in the train of the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes civilization, comes education and all that makes for the general uplift of society, such as was impossible under the superstitions which are a part of other religions. This fact has been illustrated in the liberation of womanhood through the influence of the Gospel.

Jesus declared that all who would become citizens of His Kingdom should be free from the enslaving power of sin.

Through Christ we find freedom from the despair of sorrow. For in the Gospel of Christ and in the Kingdom of Christ is the assurance of ultimate victory and of eternal life.

Christ came to earth bringing freedom, freedom in its broadest and truest sense. In the Kingdom of Christ all men are *freemen*.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM

The Master's Magna Charta or Declaration of Independence offers freedom only to those who are citizens of The Kingdom. In the Magna Charta those things which enslave are swept away that we might be free to enter upon the new life as citizens of The Kingdom. Christ came not only to free us from bondage, but He came also to establish a Kingdom of free-men. In this lecture we are to consider the constitution of this Kingdom.

First let us consider what the constitution demands of one that one may become a citizen of The Kingdom. It cannot demand membership in an organization, for we have learned that The Kingdom is not confined within any organization. To be a citizen of the Kingdom of Jehovah the Hebrew believed that one must be a part of the Jewish Hierarchy. In the Christian era there have been many who have believed that to gain citizenship in Christ's Kingdom one must come in through the doors of a certain church organization, or by the observance of some ordinance such as baptism. There are certain church organizations that now contend that the Kingdom on earth is limited to their organization, and that none can be citizens in The Kingdom without being members of that church. However, we understand now, as never before, that Jesus did not make the requirement for citizenship in His Kingdom the vows of any church and that we do not come into the Kingdom by submitting to any ordinance.

We can see that if church membership makes us citizens of The Kingdom that there are some very

unworthy folk who are citizens, and some who are very worthy who have not attained this citizenship because of their failure to take upon themselves the vows of a church.

It cannot be the ordinances of the church that are the chief requirement for citizenship in The Kingdom, for many who are at heart disloyal to Christ, and thoroughly unworthy of citizenship in His Kingdom, faithfully observe the ordinances. The Protestant churches recognize only two ordinances, baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All, I think, will agree that these ordinances are symbols of spiritual realities. Baptism is but the "outward sign of inward purity," without the inward purity baptism is of no value. The Master said to His disciples on that last night with them, when He gave them the bread and the cup that were to represent His broken body and His shed blood, "Do this as oft as you shall drink it in remembrance of me." In this we see the significance of the ordinance that we do it *in remembrance of Him*, of His death and of His passion, to inspire a real inner devotion. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is of religious value only as it stimulates the spiritual life.

This with what was said in the last lecture will make it clear that it is not by any outward form that we may enter The Kingdom. One may take upon himself the vows of a country, he may swear allegiance to the ruler and declare his willingness to abide by the nation's laws, and at the same time be the most debased of traitors at heart. But because those before whom he takes his oath of loyalty cannot know the depths of a man's inner consciousness they must accept the formal declaration of allegiance as sufficient to secure citizenship. It is not so in the Kingdom of

Christ, for one may declare loyalty at the altar of the church and thereby gain admittance to the membership of the church, but if he be disloyal at heart he cannot gain citizenship in the Kingdom.

The prime requisite for citizenship in Christ's Kingdom is absolute allegiance to the King. The demand is that the kingdom of our lives shall actually be surrendered to King Christ. Not only formally, for there may or may not be an observance of a certain form when the surrender is made, but the act of surrender must be like our worship "in spirit and in truth."

One day, as Jesus walked by the side of the sea, He discovered Simon and Andrew his brother mending their nets, and their nets were all that they possessed, for afterward in speaking of it Peter said that they had left all to follow the Master. When Jesus saw these two fishermen mending their nets He called to them, "Come ye after me, and I will make ye to become fishers of men." "And straightway they forsook their nets" (their all) "and followed Him."

A little farther along the shore the Master came upon James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They possessed not only nets but also a ship, and the Master called to them, as He had called to Andrew and Simon, and they left not only their nets but also their ship and their father. They possessed a little more than Simon and Andrew, and Jesus demanded that they leave all if they would follow Him. That is what He demands of us if we would become citizens in His Kingdom, that we surrender all and follow Him. Probably not in just the same manner that He demanded of these first disciples. He probably does not demand that we forsake all that we have; but He does demand that we surrender all that we have to His control that it be used in His service.

There came after Jesus, at one time, a great multitude, and some of them were desirous, no doubt, of becoming His followers. To them He said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." We understand that Jesus did not mean hatred as we understand hatred. He meant, rather, that to be His disciple one must give Him (Christ) absolutely the first place in one's life; that our loyalty to Jesus Christ must be before all else; every affection, every ambition, every whit of our lives must be under His control.

The prime requisite for citizenship in Christ's Kingdom is that we surrender the Kingdom of our lives to Christ, that in them He may rule without rival.

Christ was not a law-giver. Moses was the law-giver, and Sinai the mount of the law. Jesus Christ gave to the world an eternal principle which is to be the foundation for all right law and holy life for all time. On the Mount of the Beatitudes He taught us of the ethics which are founded upon this eternal principle. He gave but one commandment and we need but that one, for it is broad enough to include all others. It is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye *love* one another even as I have loved you, and that ye also love one another."

The Law of the Kingdom of Christ is the Law of Love.

The laws of the Kingdom are not the stern "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," such laws as our legislators write on our statute books to restrain those that are lawless at heart from committing violent deeds. They are not such laws as Moses gave to the children of Israel because of their inexperience and lack of self-control. Such laws as these may control men's actions

and are the only kind of laws that can be made for a temporal government, for man cannot deal with that which lies deeper than the outward conduct. The laws of an earthly kingdom may say, "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit adultery"; and a temporal government may punish the man who kills, or steals, or is immoral, but they cannot control the hatred, or the covetousness, or the lusts of men's hearts. Only God can deal with the heart.

Christ's Kingdom is "within you," it is *spiritual*, its laws are, therefore, spiritual laws. They are higher than the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," for they are laws that control the spiritual life. This does not mean, as some have supposed, that these spiritual laws are entirely divorced from the rules of conduct. The inner life is the source that controls the outer life. The inspiration of conduct, whether right or wrong, comes from the heart. The Master said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies."

If, therefore, a man's heart be right, his conduct will be right, and he will not need the restraint of temporal laws.

This one spiritual law, which is the substance of the law of the constitution of Christ's Kingdom, the law of *love*, is so all-embracing in its scope that those who obey its mandate will always have the right spirit life, and will, therefore, be guiltless of committing the overt act of the criminal. For the overt act has its birth in the heart, and the heart that conforms to the divine law of love cannot give birth to "murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, and blasphemies."

There is much more than a passive goodness that will be the outgrowth of conforming to the law of love.

The man who is obedient to the demands of the constitution of The Kingdom will not only refrain from committing these overt crimes, but he will live so actively virtuous that we will find him not only one who refrains from doing evil but one who constantly *does* good.

These facts are perfectly illustrated in the Sermon on the Mount. The constitution of the Kingdom being one of spirit rather than of letter could not be builded like the constitution of a temporal government, a constitution that can deal with each specific case, that in this case thus and thus is permitted, and in that case so and so is prohibited, that there are certain things that one must do and certain other things that one must not do. Such a constitution, at best, can cover but a limited field and could never meet the demands of the changing order of society and, at the same time, be sufficient to meet the demands of a spiritual Kingdom that is eternal.

As the temporal order changes we must change our governments and their laws to meet the demands of the changing conditions. But the constitution of Christ's Kingdom is broad enough to meet the demands of every condition of society and be the foundation of every law demanding righteousness. We shall see more of how this works out when we deal with the subject of law in the next lecture. What I am now attempting to say is, that in the Sermon on the Mount we do not find a legally constructed constitution, for a spiritual constitution does not have a legal form. We find that in this sermon the Master is illustrating how the law of love will work in the hearts and lives of men. The code of ethics that it must inspire, the line of moral conduct that will be the working out of this

law, the positive virtues that will be so large a part of men's lives when they have accepted this Law of *Love* as the Law of The Kingdom in their hearts, all this Jesus illustrates in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is true that Christ said that He had not come to destroy the law of the prophets but to fulfill them. We understand by that, however, that the end of the old was come and that the law of the prophets for the Jewish Kingdom had fulfilled its day and was to be superseded by the new. The old constitution of the letter passes away and the new constitution of the spirit comes to take its place. Sinai furnished the constitution for the old, the world's greatest legal structure, but no legal form is sufficient for the constitution of the spiritual Kingdom. So we should no longer look back to Sinai, the Mount of the Law, but rather look to the Mount of the Beatitudes, The Mount of the Spirit.

Let us study the Sermon on the Mount that we may see how Jesus builds the new above the old; the law of the spirit of love above the law of the letter.

He says:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said of them of the old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."

This was the old law.

"But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment: and whosoever shall say unto his brother 'Raca' shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool shall be in danger of Hell fire."

By this passage I understand the Master to mean, the old law said "Thou shalt not kill," the new law restrains a man from murder not by the fear of judg-

ment, but because anger is contrary to love, and the more angry one becomes the less he loves. One violates the law of love by being angry without a cause. If one loves he will not be angry, if he is not angry he will not kill.

Again Jesus said:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said of them of the old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Such was the old law.

"But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Under the reign of the old law one might not commit the overt immoral act for fear of the consequence of breaking the law, but the adultery might still be in the heart. The new law leaves no way by which a man if he obey the law of the Kingdom, may desire in his heart to wrong a woman. For a man cannot "look on a woman to lust after her" while his life is controlled by the law of love. If love has, therefore, driven out lust, the man will neither sin by thought nor by act. We, thus, see that the law of the new Kingdom is superior to the law of the old.

Again:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." For such was the old law.

But this is not in accord with the new law of love. It could not be that we could love one another as Christ loved us, and at the same time obey this old law of retaliation. Again the Master shows us that the new law is superior to the old.

"But I say unto you resist not evil."

Non-resistance rather than retaliation will be the outcome of observing the law of the new Kingdom.

In the other two cases mentioned (that of the command against murder and that against adultery) obedience to the new law would compel obedience to the old law; in this case, however, the new law inspires a course of conduct which is contrary and superior to that commanded by the old law. So the Master illustrates more fully than in the other instances just how the new law would work out.

"But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn ye the other to him also."

"And if any man sue thee at the law and take away thy coat give him thy cloak also."

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile go with him twain."

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

In all this we find that the conduct which is born of the new spiritual constitution is of eminently higher order than that which could possibly be enforced from the *letter* of any law. There could be no code of laws that could compel a man to refuse to resist evil. From a legal standpoint a man could hardly be compelled to lend to the borrower. It would be a paradox to say that we could have a law forcing a man to do more for his enemy than his enemy could require of him. Yet we will admit that the man who does not retaliate, who does not resist evil, who does more for his enemy than is required of him is a man of greater worth to the world than the man who obeys the mandate of the old law of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Where the old law fell short, where the letter could not reach, the new law of the spirit accomplishes the highest and best.

The Master further enlarges on this point:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy."

Obviously it would be impossible to enforce a statutory law that men must love their enemies. If it had been a law of the decalogue it could not have been enforced, for it requires more than law to make it possible for a man to love his enemies. But the man who is a citizen of Christ's Kingdom and is controlled by the law of love will find that without any commandment, he will be constrained to do as the Master urged:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

One cannot well help seeing that both the outward and inward life that come as an outgrowth of the law of the new constitution are in every way superior to that engendered by the old law.

There are many other illustrations of these points in this wonderful sermon of the Master's. I cannot treat them here, but those who are searching to know more of His Kingdom on earth will do well to make a life-time study of the Sermon on the Mount.

We must not think that the specific examples with which Christ deals in the Sermon on the Mount are a full code of laws to control the conduct nor a complete ethical code. That which one should do when smitten on the cheek, or sued at the law, or when compelled to show the road to strangers are not the only things that Jesus wants that we should deal with in a manner contrary to the old law of retaliation; "An eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth." "Murder and adultery are by no means the only things that the Master would have controlled by an inner motive. Giving alms and saying prayers are not the only things that Jesus would have

us do inspired by the spirit. Christ did not legislate for a specific course of conduct. He was not a law-giver after the manner of Moses. In this great sermon He illustrates to us how incorporating into our lives that which is the principle of the constitution of the new Kingdom, *love* will produce in our lives that which is the very highest both in conduct and spiritual life.

The constitution of The Kingdom requires as the prime requisite for citizenship that we surrender the kingdom of our hearts to Christ and that in our lives we crown Him King. The law of the Kingdom is the law of love, a law superior to all other.

There are homes where there seem to be little or no natural affection manifested. The children are well-behaved, and in other ways the home seems to be well ordered. The rule of those at the head of the home is firm and their mandates are obeyed. But these homes lacked that which is so essential to the true home, and for this reason they were not such homes as we would like to call our own. Again there are homes where you constantly feel that the ruling passion of every member of that home is *love*. Their conduct is not ordered by the demands of a well-ordered home or the commands of those who are at the head of the household, but rather by a kindly consideration of one for the other; it seems that in these homes every member lives to serve every other member. And some way these homes seemed superior, *as homes*, to those controlled by rule rather than love. In such homes we seldom hear the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." It is not necessary, for love rules there, and the rule of love is best.

It is even so in the Kingdom of Christ.

THE PLACE OF CHURCH, CREED AND LAW IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM

When I say that the Kingdom of Christ is not confined to any ecclesiasticism, I do not mean that the church is not a divine and very necessary institution. The fact that the belief in this or that creed is not the essential requirement for citizenship in The Kingdom by no means implies that creeds are unnecessary. By the declaration that Christ was not a law-giver I, by no means, mean to insinuate that a Christian is in any degree released from the responsibility of a strict observance of all the moral laws.

You will notice, however, in giving the subject of this lecture, I have not said the place of church, creed and law in the Kingdom, but, in the advancement of the Kingdom, they are things temporal and, therefore, cannot organically be a part of the spiritual. Although they be divinely planned and ordered of God, the church and creeds and moral law are structures created by men. But while they are neither The Kingdom nor part of The Kingdom they are very necessary for the advancement of The Kingdom; they are divinely planned instruments to be used for the promotion of The Kingdom on earth.

While the Master taught that The Kingdom was not bound either within the Jewish Hierarchy, or any other ecclesiasticism, and while He taught that both Jew and Gentile might be citizens, He did not teach that either the Jewish Hierarchy or any other ecclesiasticism were either useless or essentially evil. Those who claim today that, because Christ did not found an organic church, there should be no church, have altogether misinterpreted the teachings of Jesus and misunderstood the function of the church.

We cannot work in a world of temporal things without using the instruments of temporality. The forms of our thought, the activities of our lives are on the plane of the temporal; we are very largely limited by the things that are temporal. The things that have to do with our lives that transcend the temporal come and are interpreted to us very largely in the terms of the temporal. It is by "the foolishness of preaching" that men learn of The Kingdom and are taught the things that inspire them to seek its citizenship. Paul said to Titus, that God "hath in dues times *manifested* His word through preaching." And again Paul, in his letter to the Romans, writes, "How then shall they call on Him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Preaching is a thing that is temporal. It is not a spiritual function, but a temporal interpretation of things spiritual; it brings men knowledge of The Kingdom, and the message of the cross, thus creating within them the desire to become citizens of The Kingdom. Preaching is, therefore, an instrument to be used for the promotion of The Kingdom. This helps to illustrate the contention that the church is a necessary instrument of The Kingdom, for preaching is an important function of the church.

Where there is a genuine spiritual life within, it will manifest itself in some form of outward activity. If one has spiritual life it will be evidenced in the temporal life. Giving food to the hungry, and clothes to the naked, being a "father to the fatherless and a husband to the widows" does not make one a citizen of The Kingdom. One may do these Christlike things and fail in "keeping themselves unspotted from the world," or

fail in full surrender to Christ as the King of their lives, and thereby fall short of the requirements for citizenship. But one cannot be a citizen of Christ's Kingdom without feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, without being a "father to the fatherless and a husband to the widows." Where there is the inner life there will be the impulse that will inspire the outer activity.

It is, therefore, necessary that we have some kind of a temporal organization through which we can perform these duties. It was for this specific purpose that the church, as an ecclesiastical organization, was first established. Those who say that the church was founded on the day of Pentecost are in a degree correct, but it was not until later that there was anything of a formal organization that might be called an ecclesiasticism. There was an organization when the disciples had all things in common, but as all like organizations it proved a failure. The first record that we have of any successful organization was when the Apostles discovered that complaint was made by the Grecian Jews that the Hebrews were neglecting their widows. It was then that the Apostles called a meeting of the disciples and organized the first board of deacons, for the purpose of caring for the needy widows. Thus the first board of the new church was organized that the church might be "a husband to the widows."

From the time of the organizing of this board of deacons we find that the church has added such machinery as was needed to promote the affairs of the Kingdom on earth. It is needful, that the Kingdom of God may advance, that the things that are temporal be given careful attention, because it is largely through the avenues of these things that God reaches men and inspires them to lay hold on the things that transcend the tem-

poral. Let us consider certain facts that will make the truth of this contention apparent.

We give expression to, and stimulate our worship through forms. We must recognize the fact that forms are not worship, that the saying of prayers is not praying, that the singing of praises is not praising. We should understand that we cannot attain a state of heart purity by symbolizing it in the ordinance of baptism. Partaking of the sacrament of The Lord's Supper "in remembrance of His death and passion" is not necessarily remembering. But, on the other hand, we may find expression for our prayers in the saying of them, and in our praises by singing; we may show to the world that we are taking upon ourselves citizenship in The Kingdom by being baptized; and we may inspire a memory that will enthuse us for great consecration and service through the communion service. While the worship of God must be "in spirit and in truth," we must have the forms of worship to promote and inspire the worship itself.

To be worthy citizens of The Kingdom we must know much of spiritual things. It is, therefore, very essential that we shall be educated along spiritual lines. To live our religion before the world we must have an understanding of the laws of moral conduct, for those who are good citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom will also be good citizens of the earthly kingdoms. If our lives are right within, our conduct must conform. We must, therefore, be educated along lines of the moral and ethical requirements of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is very largely through human instrumentalities that the Master plans to bring the world to Himself. It is God's plan that the world shall be evangelized by the Christian people, carrying the message of the cross to

those who have not heard it. It is by the "foolishness of preaching," it is by those of His Kingdom telling those who are not, that Christ's gospel shall eventually be known throughout the world.

The world's social conditions must be made better by the constant application of the principles of the ethics of Jesus. That is, by putting into practice in the affairs of this life the Master's spirit of love. We pray that "Thy Kingdom come, and thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven," and this prayer will only be answered when constant application of the spirit of the Christ is made to the temporal affairs of life. Thus, when we put the spirit of love into practice in civic affairs, the outcome will be a practical civic righteousness; it will mean a fight against the saloon, and the white slave traffic, a battle for clean government and a demand for economic justice in the affairs of labor. It is in this way that His Kingdom will come to earth.

The church, as a body of the citizens of Christ's Kingdom, is the instrument through which these things can be accomplished, a band of citizens of Christ's Kingdom uniting their efforts to carry forward the temporal end of the programme of The Kingdom. These, in their organization, express their worship through the forms of worship of their church, they stimulate the devotional life through their services of praise and worship, they observe in some form the ordinances that they may express through them to the world something of their inner life.

From the preachers and teachers of the church, from the school, the forum and the pulpits of the church, this body of citizens of The Kingdom is educated in things spiritual and in the morals and ethics of temporal life that are the product of the spiritual life. Through the

educational avenues of the church we learn of God and His will for us and of His demands of us. We learn in what form the spirit of love is best practically manifested in the practical affairs of life.

That all may hear the gospel it is imperative that we have an organization whose propaganda will be to attend to the spreading of the gospel throughout all the earth. We must have preachers and missionaries who will spend themselves in the labor of carrying the gospel to those who have not heard it. All of the world's evangelization will not be brought about through the labors of the preachers and missionaries, but that the whole body of the church may do their part intelligently they must have instruction from those who are experts in practical methods, etc. We, as citizens of Christ's Kingdom, organize to commission and send men out as preachers, as teachers and as evangelists. For this reason an ecclesiastical organization is necessary, that the gospel may be preached, and that the world may be evangelized.

The church is an organization to assist in making a practical application of the principles of the gospel. It is not only an organization through which we may receive instruction in the methods of applying the gospel, but as an organic institution, the church is an instrument to be used in making the practical application. The church has been a great power in the past, and must be a still greater power in the future, in making for clean government. The church is the institution that will eventually destroy the saloon and the white slave traffic; the church must become a great force in demanding social justice. The work of the first board of deacons was to minister to the poor; and from that day the world's only efficient philanthropies have been either un-

der the immediate direction, or a direct outgrowth of the Christian church. The church should be an organization for administering practical charities.

The church, as machinery for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom, should be constructed in such a way as to be most efficient in accomplishing the end that it has to accomplish. The form and construction of the machinery should always be such, as nearly as it may, that it can competently meet the demands for service made by each successive generation in the advancing Kingdom. It is not essential what form the ecclesiastical organization takes as long as it is such as to accomplish its divinely ordained tasks. There is no such thing as ecclesiastical machinery, the plan of which was divinely ordained and delivered to the apostles and never to be changed. The plan of church government that was effective in the early church (whatever that plan was) cannot be effective under the newer and changed structure of society. In the changing order of society, commerce, and governments of the world, the church machinery must change to meet the demands of the changing order. Therefore, a form of church government, a piece of ecclesiastical machinery that was entirely efficient in accomplishing its task in the time of our fathers may be able to accomplish little or nothing now. It is, therefore, our duty to so change the machinery as to meet the present demands.

The forms of worship that helped men to God a hundred years ago are in many cases meaningless forms today. There is no divinely planned order or form of worship. Since it is not the form but the spirit of worship that is pleasing to God, any form that will inspire and express the spirit of worship will, without doubt, receive the approbation of the Almighty.

That form which will stimulate and express the worship of some will be without value to others, and the form of church government that is effective in serving the Kingdom in some places and with a certain type of people is absolutely useless in other localities and for a different class of folk. It would, then, be unwise that all church government should be the same, or that all men should use the same form in their worship of God. For instance, it is not necessary that the same form be used by all in administering the sacraments. The quarrels that have arisen concerning the mode of administering baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper have been absolutely uncalled for. It is not a question of mode but one of spirit.

The disputes concerning the orders of the clergy, the methods of ordinations, the quarrel concerning Apostolic Succession and all like discussions are but a waste of energy and entirely aside from the point. The clergy are no more than a part of the church machinery, they are an order of the church and not of The Kingdom, for in The Kingdom all who truly serve are priests of God, there is no division here between the lay member and the clergy. The ordination of the clergy is nothing more than the *church* commissioning that man to perform certain distinct functions in connection with its work. The only divine demand as to form and organization of the church is that it shall be such as to efficiently accomplish those things that the Master desires.

We should not retain, as a part of the church machinery, that which is old and useless simply because it is old. If it has become useless we should cast it aside and have some new that will be equal to the demands. If, on the other hand, it is old but still serviceable, we should not cast it off for no other reason than that it is old. The

only justification for the church or any part of ecclesiastical machinery is that it is *now* building up the Kingdom of Christ.

We must not forget that the church is only machinery and, therefore, no matter how excellent a piece of machinery, it will not run without power, and the power is not in the completeness or strength of its organization. The power that will run this machine is not temporal but spiritual, it is generated from the spiritual power-house of God. If the church as an organism is composed of those who are citizens of The Kingdom, those who have the power of God within, it should be a highly effective institution. If, however, the church is made up largely of members who know little or nothing of this inner Kingdom, no matter how perfect the organization is, that church will fail. The important thing after all, then, is that we be citizens of The Kingdom.

CREED

There is no virtue in either believing or disbelieving the points of any creed other than as far as they affect our lives and our faith. There are certain points of every creed that are so positively non-essential, when considered by their effect upon vital spiritual life, that it must be apparent to any seeker after truth that to our soul life it will not make one hair-breadth of difference what we believe concerning these things. Then there are articles in most creeds that are vital and essential. It is said that if a man does not believe right, he cannot be right, and this is true, in as far as the essentially fundamental things are concerned. The important question then is: How can we distinguish between the things that are essential and those that are not? My

personal conclusions in this matter cannot be binding on others. This being true I see no reason why the conclusions that others reach concerning the things that are fundamentals shall be authoritative for me. Nor am I willing that the decisions of a church council, general conference, synod or convention of any religious body shall dictate the things that I must believe, that my life may be right.

If one is willing to accept the major points of a creed that any scholar, school of scholars or the ecclesiastical authorities of some church shall dictate, solely because they have dictated it, he will find that that creed is of little or no value to him as an inspiration of life.

It is hardly possible, in any real sense, for one to believe anything for no other reason than that he is told to, or feels that he ought to believe it. That one can actually believe any creed it will be necessary that he has discovered the truth of it through his own mental processes. We cannot unquestioningly accept it, ready built, from the mind of others. A creed that we have not reached by our own searchings, one that has been untouched by the processes of our own minds and experience of our lives will be of little or no value to us.

Since men reach so many different conclusions that lead them to build so many differing creeds, and when, in so many instances, honest and capable men earnestly searching for the truth reach conclusions and make creeds that are diametrically opposed to each other, we must conclude that it is impossible under any finite circumstances to have an infallible creed. It would, therefore, be the height of injustice to demand that, to gain citizenship in Christ's Kingdom, we must believe in an infallible creed, for that would be demanding the impossible.

It is not demanded of any that they believe in any creed other than the one that they build for themselves. If this creed is the same as that accepted by others, if it is the same creed that has been stated by the church councils, the official creed of some church body, well and good, but each person in accepting this creed, must, if the creed is in a personal sense his own, after searching in the light of his own reason, and in his own experience, have found the creed to be the one that in reality he believes.

We must have a creed; but to be of value it should be one built from our own reason and experience. By this I do not mean that we should ignore either the knowledge possessed by the fathers or the conclusions of those who are especially fitted to speak authoritatively on these matters today. What I do mean is, that having secured all of the enlightenment that we can get the creed that we accept as our own should square with the norm of our own reason and experience.

We must not claim for our creeds infallibility. No creed is infallible, no creed contains all of the truth. Each successive generation has claimed that its creeds were the last word of truth, but the next generation has usually taken an advance step in creed building, only to claim in turn that its creeds had reached the goal of perfection. But no creed is infallible.

There are those who say "Let us have no creeds. Christ was not a creed-builder, and creeds are so fallible, they so widely differ and are the cause of so much turmoil and dissension, it is very apparent that they are evil." It might be possible to do without written creeds. But having no written creed is very far from having no creed. A creed is the statement of our religious belief. And whether written or unwritten we all have formu-

lated in a more or less systematic manner the things that we believe.

Those who have certain beliefs in common are naturally inclined to band themselves together for the purpose, among other things, of propagating these beliefs. It is right and proper that this organization should make an official statement of the beliefs that these members have in common, and this statement will be their creed.

Certain ones who have believed alike concerning Christ and the Bible, and other matters of religion, have organized a church and have formulated and stated the beliefs that they held in common; this is what we call church creed. There is no church, whether they recognize the fact or not, that is without a creed. They may not have an official document setting forth their beliefs, but there are certain distinctive doctrines that that church, as a denomination, hold as essential truths, and in the sermons of their preachers, and the writings of their authors these distinctive doctrines are set forth in such a way that the world is made to know that in particular this body of people are banded together to propagate certain beliefs; and these are their creed.

We are learning that it is not wise for churches to compel all members to give assent to every point of the church creed. That is, if the creed speaks on minor and disputed points. It is perfectly right for a church to make a creed stating what a majority of the members believe, but it is not wise nor just to compel every member joining to affirm his belief in every word of such a creed. One joining an organization should, of course, be in harmony with the salient points of the organization's creed. It would be unwise for a Unitarian to join an evangelical church, or one who believes in Maryolatry

to join a Protestant church. It is wise that any church should demand that those joining agree nearly enough with their fundamental doctrines to be in accord with the purpose of their organization. This is easy to accomplish without demanding assent to the minor as well as the major points of their creed. For only the insincere or the covert enemy would desire to have membership in an organization in whose cardinal doctrines he did not believe.

It should be borne in mind that revelation is progressive. There never has been a time when we have known all that there was to know concerning God, nor is that time now. We must seek that we may find Him; and since His revelation is progressive each generation should know more of Him than the one preceding. We are constantly building toward God, and the creed is the scaffolding that we construct and on which we may climb. Our fathers builded some of this scaffolding; they stated in their creeds such truth as they had discovered. We learn more about God than they knew, and we discover that certain things that they believed are not true. We should, therefore, retain that of the old scaffolding that we find still to be serviceable, and tear away that which we have found to be superfluous or unsound material. That is we should retain that of the creeds of the past that we find to be true and remove that part of them that we no longer believe. Then we may build upon the old that we have retained, such new truth as we have discovered. Our scaffolding will then be nearer the ultimate truth than was our father's. Our children will build onto the part of our structure that they find to be true, and will tear out the necessary and unsound timber that we have built in. And their children will do the same with their building,

and so on from generation to generation we build this scaffolding upward, toward the final and perfect conception of God and truth. If our creed is of no use to us as a scaffolding to climb toward God it is a useless structure.

Dr. F. H. Stockdale has illustrated somewhat like this: A creed is a telescope to be used in our search for God. Some person has described their amazement when he first looked through a telescope to discover how near it made the stars seem and how wonderful they appeared. He said that he thought that if the stars seemed so near to him when he looked through the small end of the telescope, how very near indeed they would seem if he should look through the large end. So he requested that the telescope be turned about. The narrator then told of the amazement in finding that this, instead of making the stars seem nearer made them appear to be farther away and less distinct than they had appeared to the naked eye.

A creed is a telescope through which we may look upon God. If the creed is of our own building, if from searchings and from our experience this creed has been evolved (even if it is the same creed in which many others believe) it will bring God nearer and make Him seem more real. It is the creed that gives us a clearer vision of God that is worth while. A creed that does not is not only of no value but a positive detriment. Many of us, however, turn the creed about; we look through the large end rather than the small one. That is, we make the creed the all important thing rather than the vision that it brings to us. The outcome is that the creed, instead of making God more real to us, makes Him appear smaller and farther away. Many a man, while contending loyally for a creed, has lost his vision

of God. And the reason was because the creed assumed too great proportions. Whenever a creed becomes more important in our estimation than the vision of truth, we will become incapable of grasping the vision of truth. It is for this reason that men who know little or nothing of God, and the spirit of whose lives is quite contrary to the spirit of the citizen of The Kingdom, and whose conception of truth seems narrow and uninspired to the man of vision, fight so tenaciously for certain minor points of a dogmatic creed. To them the creed is the all-important thing, and they are practically incapable of seeing spiritual truth in its right perspective because they look through the wrong end of their creed telescope.

The creed that gives one a clear vision of God may cloud the vision of another. We, therefore, have no right to demand that another accept our creed, for that which brings us close to the truth may keep them away from it, and that which may help others in their spiritual life may be a hindrance to us. It is right that we should offer our creed to others, hoping that they will find it to be of real spiritual assistance. If, however, they find that it is not, we must be tolerant, not interfering with their creed.

No creed is the last word concerning truth, all creeds are capable of improvement. If we cannot improve our own creeds, our children will be able to do so. We should never be satisfied with the creed that we have, but we should constantly search for new truth with which to build greater creeds. The vision that we have now we should build into our creed for today, stating emphatically what we believe. But we must not stop here, but must continue a search for more truth, and as new light comes to us tomorrow we must add that to the creed that we already have. And when we

discover that we no longer believe certain things that we once believed, that after all these things are only false work, we must reconstruct our creed, casting aside that which we have found to be false, and building into it the new truth that we have discovered. I not only have the right, but it is my duty, to search constantly for a clearer vision, and to change my creed with each new perception of truth. I must believe thoroughly that which makes my creed for to-day, and if I change my mind to-morrow (and I have a perfect right to do so) I must believe and state, with just as great assurance, what I believe then. But I must not claim that each creed contains the full orb of truth.

It is a serious mistake to claim that any creed enunciates all the truth. For to make such a claim for any creed is to declare other creeds to be false in every point in which they differ from ours. We should not attempt to profess that our creed is other than a statement of our *understanding* of the truth. While our creed states the truth as we understand the truth to-day it may need restating and possibly rebuilding along other lines when we understand more of the truth. And although our creed may declare that which is entirely true as far as it goes we may virtually make it false by claiming that it is the whole truth.

I know of no better illustration of all this than that old story of the blind men who went to "see" the elephant. After they had "seen" they quarreled. One said that the elephant was a tall, boneless sort of animal and he was at a loss to know how it could stand. Another said that the first was right in saying that the animal was tall but that it was mostly bone, and could, therefore, stand without the slightest difficulty. A third declared that certainly his companions had not "seen" the

elephant, for it was far from being tall, but rather a broad and extremely bulky animal. Now it is evident that the first blind man felt the beast's trunk, the second a leg, and the last the body. They were all right as far as they had investigated, nevertheless, they were all wrong, because each claimed that he had the whole truth. It is just so in the matter of creeds. The Samaritan claimed that Mt. Gerizim was a Holy Mount because God was there; and they were right, Mt. Gerizim was a holy mount, for God was there. The Jew said, "In Jerusalem we find God, we should worship Him there." And they, too, were right, for God was in Jerusalem and it was right that they should worship Him there. But on this point the creed of both the Samaritan and the Jew became virtually false because their adherents affirmed that they proclaimed the whole truth, the Samaritan saying that God might be worshipped *only* on Mt. Gerizim, and the Jew declaring that He could be worshipped *only* in Jerusalem. We know now that He could be worshipped on either Mt. Gerizim or at Jerusalem so that in their claim to possessing the whole truth and being alone right they both became wrong. We will find a parallel to this in the present day contentions of the adherents of various creeds. The truths as stated in the creeds are often incomplete, not all the truth, and, therefore, some who hold views that seem to be absolutely the contrary of our own may be seeing the other side of our truth. And we will discover that creeds that we thought to be diametrically opposed to each other are not so irreconcilable as we have supposed, but may in time prove to be in complete harmony.

It behooves us, therefore, to be extremely tolerant and never to claim that our creed is an infallible statement of all of the truth. Those of Protestantism are much

closer together in their creeds than they realize, for all creeds contain some elements of truth and no creed contains all of the truth.

We will come nearest to the ultimate and perfect conception of truth not by a zealous contention for established creeds, but by an active search for truth, always remembering that assent to any formulated creed is not the requirement to gain citizenship in The Kingdom, and that creeds are of value only as scaffolding with which we climb toward God, or as a telescope that may give to us a clearer and more perfect vision of Him.

LAW

While the spiritual life cannot be controlled by temporal statutory laws, and the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" is in no wise the law of the spiritual Kingdom; although Christ was not a law-giver, nevertheless, that which we call moral law is constantly the outgrowth of the impulse which is born of obedience to the divine principle of love.

There are those who claim that because The Kingdom is spiritual, and Christ was not a law-giver, that citizens of The Kingdom are not subject to the control of moral law. Some years ago a minister was brought to trial in a Methodist conference charged with gross immorality. The man said that he had been guilty of the act as charged, but that his spiritual life was such that he was no longer bound by the laws that men called moral. He claimed that things that were common and unclean to those of lesser spiritual attainments than his were to him clean and holy. The conference, very justly, expelled him from the ministry and from membership in the church, for a man does not reach

the place on this earth where he is superior to moral law. We saw in the lecture on "The Constitution of The Kingdom" how moral law was always an outgrowth of spiritual life.

Although we are citizens of a spiritual Kingdom, and the springs that feed our life are not temporal but eternal, nevertheless, we are living in the realm of temporal things, and in many things we are limited by the fetters of temporality. While we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven we also have citizenship in some kingdom of this world. Having responsibilities pertaining to the spiritual life does not in any way lessen the responsibilities that we have in connection with the temporal life. When we have the right perspective we will understand that the temporal should not be neglected for the spiritual, but should be under the control of it. We cannot say that we live above the control of the laws that are temporal, for we do not, but the temporal laws should be the outgrowth of the higher laws, the principles of the spiritual Kingdom.

If each citizen of Christ's Kingdom was so thoroughly equipped in judgment and spiritual balance, and if all had sufficient understanding of economic and sociological conditions, and vision of great breadth so that all would be equally capable of translating the spiritual principle into the moral law, every citizen of The Kingdom might be granted the privilege of being a "law unto himself." But we find that to solve the great moral problems and establish wise moral laws we must have the composite judgment of the many who are trying to bring into the temporal that which is inspired by the principle of the spiritual. No one person is equal to so great a task.

We find that those who are equally sincere in their

desire to bring Christ's Kingdom to earth differ very widely as to what will be required to make possible its coming, and are not at all agreed upon the conditions that will obtain when it is come. However, the spiritual leaven, working through consecrated Christians, eventually brings about an ultimatum which is the composite judgment of the thinking body of the citizens of The Kingdom on earth, and this judgment of the thinking whole leavens all society and thus inspires our moral law. Therefore, the only safe rule for conduct along the line of fundamental morals must be not the judgment of the individual but the conscience of the whole.

Some one objects that this is not a definite enough authority. Why, we hear questioned, did not the Master make authoritative deliverances on all moral questions? Why did He not give to the world a moral code as Moses did to the Children of Israel? This would have been impossible, for Christ had to do with things that are eternal, and no moral code can do more than meet a passing demand of temporal society. Aside from the decalogue, which is the foundation of moral law until this day, no moral code can become permanent in the changing conditions of society. The changing conditions demand changing laws. That which is immoral in one generation and under the particular circumstances of that time may be perfectly moral in another generation and under different circumstances, and vice versa. To illustrate:

Moses found that it was necessary to command that the Children of Israel should be at constant enmity with the peoples that dwelt in the land into which they were going, that they should have no dealings with those round about them. It would have been an act of immorality for an Israelite to marry a Hittite as it was

an evil to consider an Amorite a friend. This was an extremely necessary piece of legislation for that people at that time. For if a Jew, then, before their national ideals had been formed, and while they were yet in the childhood of their race, had made friends of the surrounding nations, if they had intermarried with these folk whose ideals were so different from their own, and whose God was not Jehovah, they would have lost their national ideals and their own God for those of their neighbors. And the Hebrew race would not have fulfilled its mission of giving to the world the truth of their being but one God. Conditions have now materially changed, and we understand the world to be one great brotherhood. It is now incumbent upon us to carry our ideals to the other nations of the earth. While to the Children of Israel in the wilderness it was immoral to consider the neighboring nations as friends it is now immoral to consider them anything else.

So the changing order demands changing law. No law-giver could build a code of laws to fit every condition of society in every age. But Jesus Christ gave a message which will fit every age and meet the demands of every condition of society, He gave to the world eternal principles that will be the foundation of right laws for all time.

Human slavery was a common institution when Christ was on earth. If He had been a Law-giver He should have condemned this institution or else we would have had no Christian authority for destroying it. But in the evolution of society the time was not yet ripe to speak out against slavery. The Master, however, gave to the world the law of love, and there came the time when it became clear to us that we could not conform to that law and hold human beings in bondage. So as the out-

growth of this divine principle or law of love, we came to understand that human slavery was immoral, and thus to legislate against it.

Nowhere in the teachings of Christ do we find any direct command that justifies our fight against the liquor traffic, but Christ was no law-giver. The cardinal principle of The Kingdom—love—has made us see that it was altogether out of harmony with any ethical system that would square with the norm of Christian ideals to allow in our midst, and give the license of our government to such an institution as the organized liquor traffic. Therefore, the church of Jesus Christ is making an effective effort, through temporal laws, to legislate it out of existence.

Thus we see that those who are citizens of The Kingdom are not free from observing moral law because they are subject to a higher law. Moreover, we find that it is their duty to do their utmost to bring into existence such moral laws as are in harmony with, and inspired by the divine and eternal principle given the world by Jesus Christ, the principle which is the law of His Kingdom—*Love*.

The church is a divinely inspired institution which is an instrument in the hand of God for the uplift of the world.

A creed is a scaffolding that one may use to climb toward God, or a telescope through which one may see God. Each man should build his own creed.

Those who are citizens of Christ's Kingdom are bound to observe all moral law.

CHRIST'S PLAN OF CONQUEST

If the time shall come, and we know that it will, when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess," and when "The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," there will have been made the mightiest of all conquests, and the victory will be the mightiest of all victories.

What a conquest it is from apparently so small a beginning to the possession of all things. Did you ever stop to think that The Kingdom had its beginning on earth in a nation of positive insignificance, a nation that played a very small part in the affairs of the world of education, commerce, or society? The Hebrew people spent many of the years of their history in bondage to other nations; as a people they were not great warriors; their commerce never bulked large in the world's commerce of that day; they knew little of art and science; they were not philosophers, and in their religion they were bigots. It is well that they were religious bigots, for their bigotry has preserved for us the truth that there is but one God, but their religious teachings were so narrow that they had little consideration for any religion outside of their own nation. How small indeed is the place given the Hebrew race by the historian as he writes of the world's progress. And the little attention they do receive is due largely to the fact that Jesus Christ was a Jew and not to the importance of the Jewish nation.

He that is King of this Kingdom which shall eventually conquer all things was born a Jew. He was not born in a palace with the rich, but in the manger of a public inn. He renounced the robes of royalty and

lived as a peasant. He had as His followers not men of wealth and culture, not men of power who came from the highest strata of even the insignificant Jewish society, but men from the humblest walks of life, fishermen, a publican tax-gatherer, men who were all, in a large degree, unlearned. The King did not die as a victor but as a criminal on the cross.

If the method of this King's conquest is the same as that of the kings of this world, this indeed is an unpromising beginning, and it would seem that The Kingdom would have been doomed to fail from the start. But the plan of conquest that is inspired and led by King Christ, that which will bring so great an ultimate victory, is not like that of the kings of this world.

Zachariah received the word of the Lord for Zerubabel that may well serve as a text to explain Christ's plan of conquest. It is, "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

The conquest of the crescent is the conquest of the sword. The Mohammedan that would please Allah most must spill much blood; he must be a zealous warrior. Those who followed the crescent have won great temporal victories in the past; they have been victorious when outnumbered and outgeneraled, because they fought with a frenzy inspired by a religious zeal. Seeing the great temporal victories won by the warfare of the sword the Christians have, in days gone by, taken up the sword for their conquest.

It is said that after the Emperor Constantine had espoused Christianity, inspired either by the vision of the cross in the clouds or from political motives, or both, he commanded that the sign of the cross should be put on the shield of every soldier, and that his entire army must be baptized in the Christian faith. Any re-

fusing to receive such baptism were to be put to death with the sword. It is said that in one day Constantine's entire army accepted the Christian faith. But it is to be seriously doubted if any great number of them became Christians. If some preachers, to-day, could use the same methods of making converts, it might greatly help their statistical report. But this is not Christ's plan of conquest.

In the Crusades the Christians made conquest of Islam not after the plan of Christ but after the plan of the prophet of Allah. The followers of Peter the Hermit made a conquest of the sword. In face of the fact that at the time the Crusades were inaugurated "the Mohammedan conquests had been at a standstill for more than four hundred years, and the old fanatic zeal of the Islam had given away to the pursuit of worldly interests and the fostering of high culture"*—and they, therefore, were not in condition to make a strong defense; nevertheless, the Crusades failed. The Christian can never conquer with the sword.

The plan of conquest that will give victory to The Kingdom of Christ is not the conquest of the sword, "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." Christ taught the doctrine of non-resistance. He taught that "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Surely then the kingdom that makes conquest with the sword will, in the end, perish, but The Kingdom of Christ will be victorious.

The last night that the Master was with His disciples He attempted, by figure, to show them that they had not as yet experienced, in any real sense, persecution, but that they must be prepared to meet it later when it would fall heavily upon them. But they failed

*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

to understand Him. He had said: "When I sent ye without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And they said, "Nothing."

"Then said He unto them, But now he that hath a purse let him take it and likewise his scrip and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one."

And the disciples, not understanding that the Master was speaking to them in figure, warning them against the enemies that they would meet, and the hardships that they would be compelled to endure, said to Him:

"Lord, behold here are two swords."

Some have said that Jesus never evidenced any humor, but I am certain that there was a twinkle of humor in His eye as He answered His disciples,

"It is enough."

Two swords enough to meet all the opposition that would be waged against the gospel. Two swords enough to meet the opposition of King Herod, two swords enough to meet the persecution of the Roman Empire, two swords enough with which to meet the whole world! Hardly enough if Christ's method of conquest had been that of the sword. But two swords were more than enough to meet all these enemies and be victorious when the warfare was after the plans of the Christ.

Christ's plan of conquest is not by might. He taught constantly peace and non-resistance. He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; that whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law and take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile go with him twain." This is not the conquest of might. The might of force of things that

are temporal have no part in the advancement of The Kingdom.

Nor is it by power. The Master said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

If His followers had understood this better in the past there would not have been in the history of the Christian church that which makes every true follower of Jesus Christ hang his head with shame. If, to-day, we understood as we should the fact that it is not by power, The Kingdom would advance in the earth with much greater rapidity than it does.

The church has always lost in the spiritual when it sought power in things temporal. When the church possessed more temporal power than any earthly kingdom has ever possessed the world was in the night of superstition and ignorance, it was a time of tyrants and of great injustices, and the world knew little or nothing of Christ's law of love. In history this time is known as the "Dark Ages." During this period The Kingdom lost rather than advanced. The temporal power brought no victories for the Christ.

No temporal power will advance the Kingdom of Christ to-day. The church is constantly losing by seeking the power of the world. The Protestant church is not striving to obtain the reins of government, nor are they asking special favors from the rulers of the earth, for this let us daily give thanks to God. I fear, however, that we are seeking temporal power in another way.

Let us pause to analyze some of the efforts that the Protestant church has been making of late in America and see if we are not seeking to advance by some other plan than that laid down by the Master.

More than ever before, we, as a church, are putting

great stress on numbers. We estimate the church's strength very largely from her statistical tables. Stupendous efforts are being made by every denomination to show large increases in membership. Every pastor knows that there is extremely heavy pressure brought to bear upon every minister holding a church to increase his membership. And the pastor who can show the greatest increase receives credit for having had the largest degree of success. We are using every conceivable method to increase our church membership, when the only justifiable method is the appeal of the gospel. We feel that when we can show an increase in membership that we are giving proof of advancement in The Kingdom, when it is often the reverse. There were several times during the earthly ministry of Jesus that he could have established an organization that would have been of great power in a temporal way. He could have had a multitude more of followers than He did have if He had not demanded so much of them in the matter of spiritual life, and if He had not demanded such rigorous sacrifice. But the ministry of the Master was given to the delivery of a message to as many as would willingly listen, and to the doing of good, and not in displaying to the world a multitude of followers.

We are judging the success of a preacher very much, these days, by the size of the congregations that attend his ministry. The man who preaches well the true gospel message will, I have no doubt, have many hungry and anxious hearers. But the preacher who works to get crowds as an end, or who lusts for crowds for his own satisfaction, will fail. He may get his crowds, but he will fail in getting to them the vital message of the cross. The crowds that attend some men's ministry are the badge of their failure rather than of their

success. It is not difficult to get crowds if one understands psychology and has some native genius. The multitudes are always willing to come after a little novelty. Curiosity concerning the eccentricities of a preacher, a sensational sermon or a moving picture machine will bring crowds to church, but they will not bring them to God. The men who use these methods know that they fail in bringing results for the spiritual kingdom. But the demand is for crowds, and the man who can pack his church with people is considered the successful preacher, and is called to be the pastor of the strongest churches.

There were many times that great multitudes followed Jesus. Once, you will remember, they followed Him to hear what He had to say. He taught them all day, and when evening had come He did not want to send them away hungry, but having no bread to give them and no money with which to buy He took the two loaves and five fishes, and, by miracle made it sufficient to feed the multitude. After this they insisted that He become their king. He, taking a boat, went across the sea to escape them, for they desired to make Him their King because of the miracle rather than because of His message. They followed Him across the sea, and came to Him the next morning again demanding that He become their King. They would willingly have followed Him if He had continued performing miracles. But He refused, telling them of the demands of the spiritual kingdom so that they, disappointed, every one left Him. This is not the only time that Jesus turned away crowds that desired to follow Him from motives other than the highest. Jesus had no ambition for crowds if they followed from a wrong motive. His desire was to get a message to the hearts of men, and when crowds followed

Him demanding signs and wonders they would not listen to His message. To-day when the crowds demand novelty, sensational preaching and moving pictures they will not listen to the message of the cross.

From a temporal standpoint there may be profit in great crowds; but there is no gain for the Kingdom of Christ without the crowds are hungry for, and willing to listen to the message of the gospel. By this I do not mean that every bore who preaches, in the most uninteresting fashion, some of his favorite dogmatics calling them the gospel, is the preacher whose work will advance The Kingdom: neither is the Kingdom advanced because great crowds have been attracted by some form of sensation or entertainment passed off under the name of religion.

The Kingdom is no more advanced by enrolling as church members men influential in the high places in the earth than enrolling those of the humbler walks of life. Do we not often strive to win the favor of those in high places more than we do that of those who occupy more humble positions? Pastors and laymen often say, "If we could only get Mr. M—— it would mean so much to us, for he is a man of much influence in the city and state." It is not that we *get* any one but that we get the message of Christ to them. In The Kingdom the man who has great prestige in the affairs of this world, and the man who is unknown outside of the radius of his own immediate neighborhood, stand as equals, provided they have attained alike in the things of the spiritual. The things that give men prestige in the affairs of the temporal will not give them high rank in the affairs of the Kingdom of Christ. That a church has within its membership the most influential men of the community, state, or nation does not mean that that church is of

more power in advancing The Kingdom than a church of the most humble membership.

Neither is it by the power of wealth that The Kingdom makes conquest. Too much of the church's energy is used in developing the material side. We boast of our fine church buildings. One pastor too often feels that he is more fortunate than others because the members of his church are well supplied with this world's goods. We put forth great effort to build fine edifices as evidences of the power of the church. But valuable church property and a wealthy church membership does not signify that The Kingdom is making a successful conquest for men's hearts. All too often it means that the church is failing in promoting The Kingdom, for it is not by the power of wealth that King Christ and His hosts advance to claim the kingdoms of the world for their own.

A look into the past will show us that the periods of real spiritual advancement, that the times when many sought and found God, the epochs when great hymns were written, and men made great discoveries of spiritual truth, were not times when the church was in special favor with those who stood in the high places of the earth, nor was it when the church was an institution of great wealth, it was not during a time when the great masses of the people, religious and irreligious, sought to be entertained by religious services. In the times when these things prevailed the church lost its vision. Surfeited with wealth and patronized by those in power the church became recreant in delivering its divine message, its leaders lost their spiritual perspective and became absorbed in the affairs of the material, until at times the church practically ceased to be an instrument for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom, and

deteriorated into a great material organization existing for material ends only.

This was the condition of the Jewish churches two thousand years ago. Rich, and having influence with the Roman government, they had lost their vital contact with God, and their worship was of the most legal sort, a religion of form rather than of spirit and life. John the Baptist came as a forerunner of Christ; he was no rabbi; he had no favor with the Roman authorities; he was not a man of wealth and had no refinement; he did not entertain the multitudes with his learning, nor with captivating oratory. He was only a rude hermit dressed in camel's hair and girded with a leathern girdle, living on a steady diet of locust and wild honey. His speech was a blunt recital of the sins of the people, and a warning to flee from the wrath to come. True, he gained little as this world counts gain, for his loyalty to his mission lost for him his head. Nevertheless, he was the capable forerunner of Christ Himself, and did more, preaching under the open sky by the River Jordan, to reach Jerusalem with a vital spiritual message, than all the Jewish Hierarchy, with its wealth and influence, with its learned rabbis and majestic ceremonies.

When the church of Rome had so far forgotten its divine mission that its chief ambition was for temporal power, great wealth, and magnificent cathedrals; when it had so far forgotten the vision of the cross that the Pope sent Tetzl into Germany to peddle indulgences that he might add to the splendor of St. Peter's, we find that the church wielded absolutely no influence for uplift. The morals inspired by the church were of the very lowest type, and its religion was one of dead forms. Then came Martin Luther, the humble monk of Wittenburg. In the Reformation that followed there was no

power of wealth, the princes that became a part of the Lutheran movement had little more influence than the most humble peasant. The great aim of the Reformation was to bring to the masses the spiritual message of the doctrine of Salvation by faith. The Kingdom had made no progress during the days of the temporal power and wealth of the church, but it moved forward with mighty strides under the humble leaders of the Reformation.

In the first of the eighteenth century the Church of England was rich and powerful, but the morals of the clergy were such that it brings a feeling of shame to speak of them. The spiritual life of the church was dead, their services had lost their power, and their religion had deteriorated into a form. Then came the Holiness club at Oxford. The Wesleys had neither wealth, nor influence with those who sat in the seats of the mighty. They were barred from the pulpits of the church, and were compelled to go into the fields and onto the streets to preach to the folk of the humbler station in life. England felt a stir of spiritual life that was more than a form, it was a power in the lives of men, a true salvation and the Protestant world was moved to a new vital piety. Whenever the church sought to advance either by might or by power the Kingdom of Christ lost rather than gained.

"Not by might nor by power but *by my spirit, saith the Lord.*" The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual. The power of our conquest is the power of the spirit of the Christ. It is the way of the cross. The way of the cross is the way of self-sacrifice; and the spirit of the Christ is the spirit of love which manifests itself in a life given over entirely to the service of others.

Nowhere in fiction do we find the spirit of the Christ more forcefully illustrated than in the great masterpiece of Victor Hugo's, "Les Misérables." Jean Valjean did not occupy a place of power or influence in the world. There were times that he might have attained these, but on the threshold of attainment he always gave it up to serve others. A galley slave, one haunted and hunted by the minions of the law, at every point he surrendered his happiness for the happiness of others. His youth was spent at the galleys because he stole bread for his sister's children, he died in a bare attic in an effort to make Cosette happy. Unknown and unloved, save by Cosette, his life was, from the standpoint of the world, a tragic failure. But as we read this story we feel that this life towers above that of the man of wealth and of power, above those who were loved and were happy. And this because his life was a life of sacrificing service.

When measured by the material standards of success the life of Jesus Christ was a pitiful failure. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head." He renounced His right to the royal robes, He turned aside from those who would make Him king of a temporal kingdom, He was hated by the powers of the church, and heard gladly only by the common people, He was crucified as a malefactor by religious leaders. And yet no life has had so large a place in influencing the world. The greatest event of all history was not some military victory, it was not the conquering of some great empire, it was not the success of either a great man or nation. The greatest event in history, the event

which above all others means uplift for the world, was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Christ's plan of conquest is by the way of the cross, which is the way of self-sacrificing service.

In a parable Jesus once likened the Kingdom of Heaven to leaven that a woman hid in three measures of meal, and the leaven leavened all the meal. Again He likened The Kingdom unto a mustard seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds," but in it was the power of life. And the mustard seed, when it was planted, grew to be the "greatest among herbs, and became a tree so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof." You will notice that Jesus did not liken The Kingdom to that which bulked large in the eyes of the world, but rather to that which appeared insignificant but was pregnant with life.

Not by the might of armies, not by the power of nations, not by wealth, nor yet through the influence of those who stand in the high places in the earth, but by the self-sacrificing lives of service of the citizens of The Kingdom, lives and service born of the spirit of love—by the humble, unpretentious life that is lived always for others, by the lives of those who do not seek position for themselves, by the life that is not one of war and contentions but of Christlike non-resistance, will society be leavened. This Christ spirit will be the mustard seed that will grow into the mighty tree of the everlasting Kingdom. When the kingdoms of this world have perished, when the great fortunes and the mighty fame that have been builded by men have been forgotten, the Christ will be reigning over a victorious Kingdom.

Let me say once again, "'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,' saith the Lord."

THE UNFOLDING REVELATION

It is God's great task to reveal Himself to men.

A people have always been like the God that they worship. The Greek Gods were immoral, therefore the morals of the Greek people were of a very low type. The Gods of the Hindus are cruel, therefore, we find that those who worship them are a cruel people. The Hebrews believed that Jehovah manifested bitter hatred toward His enemies, and they were constantly evidencing an extreme and vengeful hatred toward all of their enemies. Only those who understand their god to be just and merciful are themselves just and merciful. Those who worship a god they believe to be impure will be impure; if they understand their god to be pure they will strive to be pure themselves.

It is, therefore, essential that, for a people to attain the highest, they must understand their god to be in every way the highest, for their standards will never be higher than those inspired by their god. In fact, they must understand that their god greatly transcends the possibility of their present attainments that they may progress toward him as their ideal.

That the world may reach toward that which God would have them attain it must understand the true character of Him whom we worship. We will grow better as we understand more of God. We will find our ideals constantly elevated as we search for Him and discover more of His goodness, His purity, and His love of mercy. As we understand more of God's righteousness we will, ourselves, become more righteous.

Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." We have eternal life only as we have pure hearts and we can have pure hearts only by imitating God in Christ. If God fails to reveal Himself to men or if they refuse to seek Him how can they have life?

That He may inspire in His children the highest and best life, it is God's great task to reveal Himself to them. It is no small task that is worthy of being *the* great task of the Almighty. Such a task as this is not the work of a day or of a generation, it is the work of all time, and I am not sure but that it is also the task of eternity.

We are too much inclined to measure the movements of God by the finite conception of time. We feel that He should complete the great task of self-revelation in the span of a man's life on earth; and that surely now after these many centuries that men have been searching for God, the revelation should be complete and we should know all that there is to know about Him. The fact is that each generation of the past has felt the same way and has said, "We know God as He is."

We forget that in the sweep of eternity "a thousand years is as a day," and the span of all time till now has not been long for God to have been working at this task of revealing Himself to men. Then men have always been so slothful in their search for Him, and so slow to receive the revelation that has, from time to time, been given them. For He sent them "prophets, and wise men and scribes, and some of them they killed and crucified and others they scourged in their synagogue and persecuted from city to city." God, in

every age, has spoken to men who have refused to listen, He has tried to teach them and they would not learn, He has attempted to show Himself to them and they have refused to see Him. For these reasons it takes God much longer to reveal Himself to the world than it otherwise would.

Again, man could not comprehend facts as great as those that have to do with the infinite in a moment or in a generation. It teaches us somewhat of the magnitude of the Almighty when we understand that through all these ages He has been at the task of revealing Himself to the world, and the world has been searching for Him, and yet we know comparatively so little of Him.

We talk of searching for God, and forget that He is more anxious to reveal Himself to us than we are to discover Him, and that while we are seeking Him He is doing His utmost to show Himself to us. He has been trying to reveal Himself to all men, through all ages, everywhere. We search for Him in the pages of Holy Writ and find Him there, but forget that He is also revealing Himself in the grass, in the flowers, in the hills, and in the valleys, that we can see His majesty in the sun, and read Him in His wonderful handiwork in the firmament at night, in the moon and the stars. We may search for Him in nature and find Him, through His handiwork, there. If we search the pages of history we will find His footprints there. For one cannot fail to see the footprints of God as they study the movements of nations. Gibbon expected to prove in "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire" that there was no divine providence; but no student can read that great work without discovering that Gibbon proved that which he set out to disprove.

We can see the life of God in the lives of the men and women that we come in contact with in the affairs of every-day life. If we will let Him into our own life we can find Him there in a way that we can nowhere else. In fact if we do not open our lives to Him we will be unable to see Him where He is revealing Himself all round and about us. For it is the person whose life is open to the indwelling of the Almighty that will be able to comprehend the revelation that is on every side. We can see God everywhere and find Him in our own souls.

It is because of the open hearts of the seers in times past that we can know that which we do concerning the character of God. When we see how little they knew of Him back when the record begins, and then see what we know of Him now it will be apparent that God is not failing in His self-revelation. Let us follow in a very brief way the progress of God's revelation as recorded for us in the Bible.

How imperfectly the author of the story of the Garden of Eden understood the fact that God was a personal spirit unlimited by space, the maker of all things, from whose sight nothing could be hid! How unlike the God that we know was the God that walked in the garden in the cool of the day hunting for the occupants that were hidden from Him in the foliage!

Josephus tells us that Abraham was the first man to understand that there was only one God. And there are some who believe that until the time of Moses the children of Israel looked upon Jehovah as the chief God, and that Moses was the first to teach that He was the only God. Whether it was Abraham or Moses it is a long way from the first comprehension of the fact that there is but one God to the conception of Him whom we know as God.

It was no small task for God to show that He was not like the Gods that many worshipped. It was not easy for Him to teach men that He was not a creature of hatred and jealousy. It is not to be wondered that the Jew was very slow to understand that Jehovah did not have a bitter hatred for all who did not worship Him, for the peoples on every side of them worshipped gods whom they thought to be creatures who exerted the most bitter hatreds, gods that were created rather than creators, gods supposed to have passions like the passions of those who worshipped them. How were the Children of Israel to understand that their God was not like these gods? It was not to be expected that they should at once understand how different was Jehovah from the gods of their neighbors. They could discover these things only as they sought for a revelation of the infinite in His handiwork in the world about them. And the language that told of God was almost too profound to be understood by a race of children such as were these Israelites, especially when there was no one who knew the language and could teach them. The language of the created world that God has used with which to speak to men has been deciphered little by little through the ages.

But if the Children of Israel could have read this language it would not have told all, for much concerning God is so profound that it cannot be written in the language of created worlds. To know more they must have read very deeply in the experience of their own lives that they might see what God had written there. They could not read on the pages of history of how Jehovah had revealed Himself to others, for they were virtually in the morning of history, so they

could not study of His dealings with others and thereby discover what manner of God he was. To find Him they must search for Him in His handiwork in nature, and they must discover Him in His dealings with themselves; they must find Him in their joys and in their sorrows, in their defeats and in their victories. And as little by little they discovered how He dealt with them in these things they learned somewhat of the kind of God that He was.

It is not to be wondered that the Children of Israel so often misunderstood and misinterpreted the signs of God in the world and in their own hearts. It was much easier to interpret God in the light of their own lusts and passions, to think of Him as the neighboring nations thought of their gods, than it was to search in the deeper things of life for God as He really was. And if many times they, following this, the course of the least resistance, they did not do less than many who have had more light have done since. For men have always been slow to make the effort that is required to reach out and attain the newer and better conceptions of the infinite.

It is true that those of Old Testament times had a very imperfect idea of the true character of God, but it was a constantly progressing conception. A perusal of the books of the Old Testament, and a study of the ideals of the Old Testament prophets, will reveal the fact that with a few exceptions each generation knew more of the true character of Jehovah than the preceding one.

The Hebrews were not always slow scholars in the school of the infinite. While they knew altogether too little of Jehovah at any time, a careful study of their knowledge of Him as it progressed from generation to

generation will demonstrate that there were always great souls that were truly searching for Him, and in a very marvelous way finding Him. We will see that from time to time, with sudden bursts of light, they caught new visions of God and His methods of dealing with men; that one after another the prophets came to understand more of the language of the infinite and interpreted it more perfectly to the people. It is true that those whom they sought to teach were not always willing to learn, often killing the prophets who came to them with God's message. But the message that these prophets had for the world did not die with them, but remained in the souls of some who had not rejected the new revelation, and the next searcher for truth did not have to rediscover that which had already been revealed, but building upon that which those who preceded them had discovered, they moved forward toward yet greater truths.

It is astonishing, when we consider all of the facts, to know of the broad vision that Moses and David, that Isaiah and Micah had of God and of His will toward men. A careful analysis of these men's conceptions of truth compared with the knowledge that we have today will give us a profound admiration for their understanding of the infinite. It is true that Moses made laws that are not in accord with the spirit of God as we know Him. This, however, should not surprise us, but it is remarkable that Moses with his limited knowledge of God should legislate so wisely and so largely in harmony with His spirit as we understand it now.

Many of the Psalms are more in accord with the spirit of Heathenism than of Christianity. But we could hardly expect that it could be otherwise, for

David was surrounded by the spirit of Heathenism and was very far removed from the more perfect revelation concerning God that came through Jesus Christ. That which should demand our attention, however, is not the Heathen spirit in some of the Psalms, but the marvelous fact that in many things the vision of David was so very clear, and that he in general rose to such sublime heights in his understanding of Jehovah.

From the beginning men have searched for God and found Him. He revealed Himself, as best He could, as the book of Hebrews declares, "unto the fathers by the prophets." Little by little they caught a vision, bit by bit they learned of Him, until the time was propitious and then He spoke to us through His Son Jesus Christ who came to give to the world the complete revelation of God.

Saying that a complete revelation came to the world through Jesus Christ does not mean that when His mission on earth was finished that the world knew all that there was to know concerning God. It does not mean that because we have a complete record of the revelation given through Christ that we know all about God. For we are very far from knowing God in His entirety, for the revelation of Christ will not be ours until we fully comprehend Him (Christ). A language tells us nothing until we can read it; we cannot understand all that is said in a language until we are so thoroughly versed in it that we can comprehend every shade of meaning that can be put into it. The revelation that God gave to the world through Jesus Christ will be ours only when we thoroughly comprehend Him. As Christ is the infinite in the form of the finite we find that it is more than the task of a few centuries to so know Him that the revelation He brought will

be entirely clear to us. We have been trying now for over two thousand years to fathom the Master and His message and we are just beginning to comprehend its true height and depth.

It would be a message of little significance if it could be completely comprehended in a century or two. We cannot know the fullness of the life and message of Christ without spending great effort in the search, not because it is hidden from us but because it is a struggle for us, with the limited capacity of the finite, to fathom so profound a message as the Word of the Infinite.

As we study the years since Christ left the earth we discover, that while there have been times that we have not been diligent in our search, and times when because of wickedness we lost our contact with God and did not move forward at all, as we have striven to understand the revelation that came to the world through Christ we have moved constantly toward a more complete understanding of God and of His will for us. We know more of Christ now, and of the Father through Him, than the world knew a hundred years ago, and we have faith to believe that our children will understand His message better than we do.

It is true that there are some whose understanding of God is less perfect than was that of early Genesis. There are many who understand far less of His character than did David when he cried to the Lord to avenge him his enemies. This is true of the millions yet in Heathenism. But to find the true God they will not have to struggle through all the progressive stages that were traversed by those who searched for God when no man knew much concerning Him. It is like blazing a trail through a forest whose depths have never been pierced. It is a long and laborious task for the pioneer to discover the

way. He must search out his trail as he struggles forward day after day and week after week until at last he reaches his destination. But as he goes he blazes a trail. Then others travel over the same route that the pioneer traveled, but their journey is not long and hard like his, for the trail has already been blazed. Those who first found the road marked the way that others might follow. So the man who comes out of Heathenism to walk in the way of the cross will not have to rediscover the way, for others have blazed the trail.

Some say, "Why this long search for God? Why did He not write that which he wished the world to know concerning Himself on tables of stone, or why does He not write it in the sky that all under the dome of Heaven may read?" The answer is that He has written His revelation in a myriad of places that we might read, but we are so slow to understand. Many things may be written in a language, with which we are conversant, that we will not understand, things that pertain to a subject of which we have no knowledge. It will first be necessary that we have some fundamental knowledge of that which the language expresses before we can read that which has been written. To gain this knowledge will take time. We have a complete record of God's revelation, it is all written and we may read, but that we may comprehend it we must, in our own inner experience know something of Him whom we are seeking. Moreover, the revelation will be meaningless to us until we have tested it in our inner consciousness and read it there.

As God has been revealing Himself through the past ages He is revealing Himself now and will continue to work at the task of revealing Himself until all have

fathomed the height and depth of all things infinite. We will find a fuller and richer life as we know and understand Him better and we will discover Him only through actively searching for Him. The Master exhorted men to ask, and to seek, and to knock. And He promised that to those who "ask it shall be given," those who seek that they shall find, and to them that knock "it shall be opened unto them." It is through constant asking, and by tireless seeking, and ceaseless knocking, that we find Him. Asking, seeking and knocking everywhere, and always, for always and everywhere He is trying to reveal Himself to us. In the pages of literature, in history, in nature, in the Bible and above all in the life of Jesus Christ, He has revealed Himself.

We should seek Him everywhere, finding Him in the depths of our own souls. For we will find Him in everything only as we interpret these revelations in our own experience. The revelation becomes real as we apply it to our own lives, and as we make constant application of it to the problems of life. Christ is only, in that peculiar personal sense, real to us as He is King of our lives and we find Him in our own experience. If we would have the fullness of life we must know more and yet more about God, and to know more we must tirelessly, from day to day, from hour to hour, from moment to moment, *always* ask for knowledge of Him that we may receive it, seek for Him that we may find Him, knock constantly at the door of revelation that more and more it may be opened to us.

One morning, when at a Chautauqua at a Lake Erie resort, I found myself unable to sleep and very early, while it was yet dark, I left my bed and went to walk on the shore of the lake. At first it was very

dark, but after a time the blackness of night shaded into the grey dawn, a little later I saw over the lake, at the horizon, the sun, coming up red out of the water, and the day was much brighter. At noon, when I took my boat, the day was very bright; the dancing sunbeams upon the water brought cheer to my heart. This change from the darkness of the night to the light of this noon-day was because of the sun that had risen to the meridian.

I said to myself, "This illustrates the unfolding revelation of the Infinite. In the beginning all was darkness, for the world did not know God. Then, little by little, in an imperfect sense, it is true, but nevertheless surely, men began to understand His character and His will for them. And as they drew nearer to the coming Son of Righteousness the world grew brighter in a truer knowledge of Him. And then Jesus Christ came into the world, and now His power is traveling toward the zenith of noon-day. It is true that at times the light of His gospel has been hidden by passing clouds, but nevertheless its power marched on in the world. I do not know when, but I know that some day we will no longer "see through a glass darkly," but the revelation will be complete and the Son of Righteousness will reign supreme. Unlike the sun in the firmament, when the power of His gospel has reached its zenith it will not go down, but will shine on forever.

PRAYER

Let me say again that which I said in commencing my lecture on the Atonement. There are some truths that are so profound that they cannot be expressed through the medium of language; there are some facts that rise to such a sublime height that we can comprehend them only as we experience them. Prayer is one of these facts. You cannot define prayer so that others may thereby fathom its power. Prayer life cannot be expressed in such a way that those who do not pray can conceive its vital relation to life. We cannot build arguments that will drive men to pray, for prayer transcends logic. Men do not pray because they believe that it is a logical thing to do, but because deep in their lives they feel the need of that which prayer gives. In every soul there is an ineradicable desire to pray.

For these reasons it is most difficult to either speak or write upon the subject of prayer. There is no thought of attempting, in this lecture, so impossible a task as delivering a defense of prayer or of building a logical argument for its need. It is hoped, however, that some may be helped to seek a deeper prayer life, and that there may be some difficulties cleared away for some who have not been receiving the blessings that should be theirs in this, the mightiest of all the functions of the soul.

Prayer is the great essential of the Christian life. The other facts of Christian experience are made real to us through prayer and through prayer alone. We may give intellectual assent to many truths of the Christian faith, and understand somewhat of their vital relation to life, but they will be real to us only

as we make them ours through prayer. We understand many things *about* God which we learn from the lips and from the pen of others, but we can only *know* God through prayer. Christ is *our* Christ only as we know Him through our prayer life. He becomes our Savior as we open our hearts to Him, and that is done through prayer. He is to us a strength and guide only as He is our companion, and this is made possible as we have fellowship with Him in prayer.

Prayer is the open channel through which we reach God. It is through this channel that the divine life may enter into, and become a part of our lives, or better still, become our life. Man is a living Christian soul only as he prays. *The soul that does not pray cannot live.*

Partly because we have tried to express in language that which transcends such expression, and partly because we are so apt to think that Christianity is a form rather than a vital soul life, we are apt to put the form of prayer in the place of vital prayer itself. We too often say our prayers rather than pray. And because the form of saying prayers so often takes the place of real prayer, our prayer life becomes a drag, and our souls become lean and starved for want of prayer, all because we do not understand that prayer is not mechanical.

It is a tragedy that so many who are seriously striving to do the will of God, and to live close to Him, are failing because they do not pray. And all the while they are failing to understand this because they are conscientiously observing the form of prayer and believing it to be prayer. There are many who do not understand prayer to be more than a mystical wireless telegraph by the use of which man, on earth,

sends petitions to a God who is somewhere outside the universe; and the infinite ruler, way yonder on His throne, will hear the request thus carried to Him, and if it be pleasing to Him He will reach down into the world and change the natural order of events to comply with these requests, or so-called prayers. Thus prayer becomes nothing more than the reiteration of requests thrown out into space with a faith that somehow they will be carried to the throne of the Almighty, and our prayers become nothing more than endless petitionings for favor which in the very nature of the case will be a tiresome drag for anyone. Instead of prayer being an open channel through which life may come to our souls, it saps any vitality of spiritual life that we may have and leaves us exhausted from the effort.

Somehow we have conceived the notion that God only works when He is requested to do so. We feel that for a church to receive greater spiritual life the membership must be constantly petitioning God for it, and that in due season, if we faint not, God will take account of the petitions and grant the desired favor. We forget that it is the constant desire of the Almighty to send, at all times, the greatest amount of spiritual blessing that any people will receive. Spiritual life can only come through prayer. But the reason that it comes only through prayer is not that God refuses to give that which He could give because He has not been sufficiently petitioned. He cannot give spiritual life without prayer, because it is through the channel of prayer that spiritual blessings reach us, and if the channel is not open we are out of touch with God and there is no medium through which the blessings can come.

I say that it is a tragedy that so many who are seeking for a true spiritual life are allowing a mechanical saying of prayers to sap up their spiritual vitality. Instead of it bringing them joy, they find that prayer is a hard duty. If our prayer efforts are but a drag and bring us no joy it is certain that we have not yet learned the secret of true prayer. And it is meet that we request, as did the Apostles, "Master, teach us to pray."

Harold Begbe, in his book "Other Sheep," struck the keynote of this matter when he said, "Prayer is an aspiration of the immortal soul seeking communion with its Maker, not a request for benefits and advantages."

That we may know how to pray we must know where to find God. It is a cold and dead sort of communion which comes only by crying out into space that which we have faith to believe will somehow be carried to the ear of Him who dwells outside the universe. If our idea of God is that of the ruler who sits upon His throne in the Heavens and touches the world only as He reaches into it from without to grant the requests of men, we will not be able to have any relationship with Him other than the wireless telegraph sort of prayer. For God is, to us, where we find Him.

Moses, after a long and soul-trying search covering a period of many years, a search which began in the schools of Egypt and continued through forty years of shepherding in the land of Midian; a search in which Moses, had he but known, and if his soul had been in the right attitude, could have found God in a myriad of places, but he found Him at last while gazing upon a bush in the land of Midian. And because Moses saw

God there the bush burned, and he took off his shoes, for he realized that he was on holy ground.

Years later Moses was in great need of close communion with God, so he went away alone to talk with Him. For Moses, in those forty years of shepherding in Midian, had learned the lesson that is so essential to all of us in our devotional life, that for one to listen best for the voice of God they must go apart from the hurrying throng, from the things of the world that distract the mind, and be for the time alone with Him. When Moses needed in a particular way to talk with God he went alone to the top of Sinai. And, thereafter, to the Jew Sinai was the holy mount, for Moses had found God there.

It was too much for men to comprehend easily that God is everywhere. When the temple was built at Jerusalem there was the Holy of Holies where it was expected that God would come. He was not to be found in the outer court, nor yet in the inner court, in fact only in the Holy of Holies; and although His presence filled the Holy of Holies, God Himself came and dwelt between the Cherubims that were over the ark of the covenant. They found Him there because it was there that they looked for Him.

But God is everywhere. He was not only in one bush in the land of Midian, but He was in every bush, in every tree, in every hill and valley. But to Moses He was in one bush because it was in this bush that He found Him. All ground is holy ground, but the ground that was about the bush where Moses found God was to Moses holy ground for it was there that he had stood when he talked with God. God was on Sinai, but He was also on Mt. Gerizim, the holy mount of the Samaritan, and on every other mount, and in

every valley as well, for every mount is a holy mount and every valley is a holy valley. But to Moses and the Jews Sinai was *the* holy mount, for they had found God there. The worshippers could have found God in the outer court of the temple, or in the streets of Jerusalem, or in the hills beyond Jerusalem as easily as the priests found Him in the Holy of Holies, for God is everywhere and every place is a holy place, but to the worshippers of Jehovah He was peculiarly in the Holy of Holies, for they found Him there.

God is where we find Him. I once knew a good woman who always prayed, in our prayer meeting, a prayer that showed a great breadth of vision and a keen sympathy with God's work everywhere. When she had prayed for the Christian work abroad, and then for our nation, and afterward for the work in our own town, she would invariably close her petition by beseeching the Almighty to bless all in "divine presence." By that, we all understood, she meant those who were in the prayer meeting. Many of us feel as she did that when we come into a special prayer service or the place where we in a more formal way exercise the function of prayer we have come into the presence of God; and that when we have done with that service we go out of "divine presence."

We come into our Sunday church service, or into our prayer meeting, and feel that we are coming into the presence of God, and we are, for to us He is there, for we find Him there. When the service is ended we too often feel that we go out of "divine presence" and we will if we refuse to see Him elsewhere.

At our family prayers or in our private devotions in the secret of our own chambers we feel that for the time that we go into the presence of God, and when

the hour of devotion is over we too often go out from His presence. It is right and proper that these times should be peculiarly sacred times when God seems very near to us. We all experience times when God seems wonderfully near even as Moses did in Midian or on Sinai. But we rob ourselves of the constant companionship of the Heavenly Father when we find Him *only* at these times. We should be in "divine presence" always and everywhere, not only in the church and the times of formal prayer when we in a special way commune with Him, but we ought always and everywhere to be in His presence.

God may be, and if we will but let Him, He will be our companion at all places and at all times, on the street, at our work or at our play, in the field or the factory, in the office or store; in the midst of crowds or alone on our beds at night, anywhere and everywhere, at all times, we may find Him if we but open our hearts to His indwelling. We should think of Him not as one afar off, but as being very near, not as a dweller in Heaven only, but one who fills the earth as well, one "in whom we live and move and have our being."

I well remember of Bishop Thoburn standing before a Methodist conference and describing the difficulties of early missionary work in India. He said, "It would not have been possible if God had not been with us." Then, as if fearing that his hearers would think it only an empty pious phrase, he continued, "We were always conscious of His presence, as I am conscious of His presence now. For I am as sure that He is beside me here. And nearer than that, that He is within my heart, as I am sure that you men of the conference are sitting before me."

Prayer is a constant fellowship with God, a fellowship in which we talk to Him, talk to Him in the formal way that we do in public prayer, talk to Him in the close confidential way that we do in our private devotional life. It is fellowship in which He talks to us. This side of our prayer life is much neglected; we talk to God, but we give Him no chance to talk to us; we cry out our requests to Him, but we give Him no opportunity to answer. We do not listen for an answer. When we have our devotional times alone with Him we talk always to Him when much time should be spent in meditation, that He might talk to us. We have fellowship with God in that deep quiet way that does not need the expression of outward form or of language. True friends are often closest to each other when there is no word passed between them. True prayer does not always need the expression given in language, for much that the soul cries out to God is incapable of such expression.

We are so taken up with the affairs of our daily toil, of meeting life's problems as they come and bearing the burdens that fall upon us each day, or associating in a business or social relationship with our fellowmen that we cannot always be speaking to God, but we can always be conscious of His presence. And if we are always conscious of His presence we shall be armed so as to be victors over temptation, for He is near to supply strength for the necessary resistance. We will hardly show an ungodly temper or converse in a manner unbecoming to a Christian, nor will we be inclined to let our thoughts run in channels where Christians should not think if we are conscious that He is very near. We are weak and fall because we live so much of our time so far from Him; we would be strong in

every temptation and rise above our many trials if we would constantly have fellowship with Him. And it is by this fellowship that we "pray without ceasing."

Somewhere I have heard of a man whose life was consistently Christlike, and yet he was seldom known to make a formal prayer. One day a friend called at his office during the rush hours that directly precede the close of the day's business, and was asked to wait a little in an inner office. From his seat there he could hear the man who was often criticised for saying so few prayers, as he met some of the most trying business situations in a calm and kindly spirit that could hardly have been manifested with one having a less Christian spirit. After the last caller had gone the man who waited in the inner office heard his friend, as he closed his desk for the night, say quietly, as if to a friend by his side, "Master, we're on the same blessed terms as ever." That was all, he was not on his knees for a formal prayer, it was all so very simple that many would have denied that it was a prayer, but that man had the true secret of prayer, "Master, we're on the same blessed terms as ever." The Master a constant companion through all the trying situations of the day, he had fellowship with Christ, and *that is prayer*.

The child awakes in the night, it is dark, the great unknown is before it, its little heart beats wildly in fright, it opens its mouth to cry, it reaches out its arms and then its hand touches its mother's face. She takes the little hand in her own and the little heart comes back to its normal beat, its cry dies unheard, the fear is gone and the child sleeps *for its mother is there*. We waken to the realization of the world of sin all about us. Who are we that we can meet and overcome all life's trials, and hardships, all its temptations and sorrows?

We cry out with the fear of it all; then we reach into the broader and higher life and our hand is clasped in the hand of God and we rise above all the conflicts of the world for God is there. *That is prayer.*

The soul that does not pray cannot live. But the soul that prays has an abundance of life in the midst of the greatest difficulties. To talk with God and God with us, to have fellowship with God everywhere and at all times, *that is prayer.*

“Speak to Him, for He heareth.
And spirit with spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
Than hands or feet.”

THINGS OF WHICH WE ARE CERTAIN

The Christian church has grounds for a feeling of alarm to-day when we consider the large number who are forsaking the Christian faith, either being lured away by some religious fad such as Theosophy, New Thought, Christian Science and the like, or else their faith is destroyed by the onslaught of doubt. It is heart-breaking to think of the hundreds of young folk, who, because of doubts that are born with the new mental awakening which comes with their first years at college, lose their Christian faith, and finding nothing to take its place, drift away from all religious life.

We have been explaining these losses by blaming them to the fickleness and superficiality of those who forsake the Christian camp for that of some one of the many preset-day religious fads and we have been accusing the colleges of robbing our young folk of their faith by destructive and unorthodox teaching.

There are certain individual cases where these reasons may explain: there are folk who are so unstable as to be susceptible to the fascination of every false doctrine, and the colleges do not always deal with the young people as wisely as they ought concerning these matters. But in the main neither of these explanations explain; Christianity is losing some strong-minded and educated people to the non-Christian cults, and our colleges, especially the denominational colleges, have faculties composed of earnest and consecrated men and women. We must go deeper than either of these reasons to find an explanation.

In a large part the fault lies in the foundation upon which so many build their faith. In many cases where

the superstructure of faith has been good, the faith has been wrecked because the foundations were not deep and firm.

Let me apply the illustration that the Master used at the close of His Sermon on the Mount, when He said, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock."

"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

It was not because of a weakness in the house that it could not withstand the storm; undoubtedly the house that was built upon the sand was as strong as the one that was built on the rock. The weakness was in the foundation. So it is with many in their Christian faith. It is firm as to superstructure but, like the house of the foolish man, it is built upon sand. So when the rain of doubt descends, and the floods of false religions come, and the winds of skepticism blow and beat upon this house of faith it will fall: because it was built upon the sand.

If the foundations that the church had laid for the superstructure of faith had been rock the onslaught of such agnostics as Robert Ingersoll would not have weakened and destroyed the faith of many in the way that it did. I am inclined to believe that the church should be thankful for such men as Ingersoll, not because of the destruction that they accomplish, but be-

cause after the storm is over we may discover what part of our foundation has been sand.

That the foundation may be rock our faith must be built upon facts about which we can have no doubt, things of which we are absolutely certain. There are many things that we think that we believe but about which there is a large degree of uncertainty. We may not know that we are not positively certain concerning these things for the reason that we have always accepted them without much thought and with very little questioning. But when, for some reason, we are called upon to give proof to support these beliefs, or we hear them assailed and are thus inspired to investigate them in a way that we have not done heretofore, we find that not only are we far from being as positive about them as we had thought, but that we can never be sure that they are facts. There are some things that have to do with religion of which we never can be absolutely sure. We may passively believe or disbelieve them, but whether we feel that we believe them or not they are exceedingly poor foundation for the superstructure of faith. For some time when we are feeling exceptionally sure in our Christian hope some one will assail that which we have made the foundation of our faith and we will find that they have planted doubts in our minds of which we cannot rid ourselves because we cannot be absolutely certain concerning our foundation. It will not be long, then, until we find that our faith is weakening and in danger of falling under the pressure of the storm. All this because we have builded upon the sand.

If the superstructure of our faith is to be built upon a foundation that makes it impregnable to the assaults of doubt and the storms of skepticism it must be upon the rock of things of which we are certain, things that

we know beyond the peradventure of a doubt. We have built too largely on sand in the days that are gone and it is for this reason that the faith of so many have been easily destroyed.

Let me point out certain sands upon which we have been building in the past, that those who have been using them for a foundation may shift to surer ground. I do not mean to say that these things are false because they are sand for foundation, they may or may not be true, but they are sand because at best they are speculation and not things that we can positively know.

There are those who build their faith upon the proposition that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God, that God had made men His stenographers to write revelation to His dictation, that every word of the Scripture is infallibly correct having come at the direct dictation of the infinite mind. Therefore, if it can be proved that in any instance the Scriptures are in error, that in their history, or geology or their astronomy they are in any case wrong, then according to the logic of those who base their faith upon the theory of verbal inspiration, the whole Bible must fall and their faith will be swept away.

Whether the theory of verbal inspiration is true or not it is a dangerous proposition upon which to build one's faith, for it will mean that if any doubt can be raised as to the authenticity of any part of the Scriptures the whole faith will be wrecked. The book of Revelation tells of an angel descending upon the "four corners of the earth." Now if the Angel descended upon the four corners of the earth, the earth must have four corners; if it has corners it cannot be round. This being true, if the Bible stands and falls with each integral part we are driven to one of two conclusions;

either the Copernican theory is wrong, and all the present-day scientific theories of the universe are wrong, and we must turn back centuries and call the world square again, or else we must throw over the Bible, and our faith will be destroyed. Many a man has lost his faith because of just this sort of an argument, having believed that the Christian faith was built upon the theory of verbal inspiration.

I hear folk say that their faith stands or falls with the story of Adam or of Jonah and the whale. No matter what I may believe concerning these stories, I should dislike to make them the foundation of my Christian faith, for we cannot be really sure one way or the other. Stop a minute and think; if you were called upon to prove to a jury that the story of Adam as the first man was literally authentic, or that the story of Jonah and the whale is the historic record of that which actually took place, how would you go about it? But, you say, "I know." How do you know? You cannot experience it. When the truth is told no one knows, for there is no way of knowing. Therefore, whether your conception of these things is right or wrong, it is an unsound foundation, for it is that about which we cannot be certain. And someone may be able, as Ingersoll did with many in the past, to creat a doubt in your mind which will of necessity weaken your faith.

There are some who build their faith upon a belief in miracles. I judge that most all Christians believe in miracles, but nevertheless such a belief is sand for foundation, for after all we cannot positively prove that some things we have called miracles have not been the workings of natural law. If we base our faith upon belief in miracles and some one produces arguments

that tend to prove that the records of many of the so-called miracles of the Bible are only myths, that were introduced into the gospels long after the authors were dead, that the healing of the sick was but the working of the principles that are today embodied in psychotherapy, that the raising of the dead was accomplished by the use of a natural law yet to be discovered, then, if our faith is based on miracles it will be weakened or destroyed. It would be extremely difficult to produce sufficient evidence to positively prove that the miracles recorded in the Bible were authentic, and we cannot be sure by experience, so no matter how plausible the arguments that are brought forward to support a belief in miracles we cannot be absolutely sure.

It is, therefore, wise to find some other foundation for our faith, so that if our conviction concerning miracles is ever weakened the superstructure of faith will remain as firm as ever. A careful study of the life of Christ will show that He did not perform miracles to establish authority upon which He might build His Kingdom, He never offered the fact that He could heal the sick and raise the dead as proof of His divine mission. We find that He performed miracles for the same reason that He told parables, to illustrate and enforce certain truths, or else because of the compassion of His own heart. He healed the sick because of great passion for those who suffered, He fed the multitude, not to show His power, but because they were hungry and had nothing to eat.

Such propositions as these of verbal inspiration and miracles may or may not be true, but they are unsound as foundation for our faith, for they are things about which there is no absolute assurance. Our faith should be founded upon the rock of certainty, upon those things that we are positive that we know.

I know of only one absolutely safe foundation for our faith, that is our own experience. Bishop F. J. McConnel has given me the following idea and illustration. We accept everything in life, aside from our religion, on the law of demand and supply. By that I mean that we experience certain demands and accept as real and essential that which best supplies these demands. To illustrate, our experience teaches us that our bodies demand food, and we have found that meat, fruit, and vegetables supply this demand. Therefore, we do not stop to argue about the necessity of food to life, but accept that which supplies so essential a demand. If some one would come to us with an argument to prove that food was unnecessary and that we would be as strong without it as we are with it, we might scrutinize the logic of the argument and find it flawless. We might be convinced from the standpoint of logic that food was never a necessity. But when meal time comes we feel the immediate need of food, and food supplies that need and we, therefore, cast theory to the wind and eat.

Mrs. Eddy said in an early edition of *Science and Health* that food was not a necessity of life, but she omitted the contention from the subsequent editions because the public demanded to know why it was that she ate three meals every day.

If we should desire to thoroughly test the argument against food, and should refuse to eat we would find that each day we would grow weaker, and that we would continually lose flesh and it would not be long until we would be near death. When once more we would answer the call of hunger we would find our strength and our flesh returning, and the vigor of life would come flooding back. Although we might yet

be unable to find any flaw in the logic that inspired us to give up food, the argument is superseded by experience. We know that our bodies demand food, and that certain meats, vegetables and fruits supply the demand; therefore, we eat them.

We are continually casting aside our theories to accept that which is offered by experience. We recognize that in the realm of the material, experience is the final authority. If this be so in the other things in life should experience not also be the final authority in matters of religion? If we make experience the final authority in matters of religion, and the foundation upon which the superstructure of our faith is builded, we shall be proof against all assaults of doubt and skepticism. Moreover, it will make the facts of religious life of much greater value to us for they will be ours in a much more personal way than when we accept our faith from some mechanically constructed abstract argument. Experience is, above all else, vitally personal, and everything that it brings us will, in the very nature of the case, be a very personal possession. That which we experience we will not doubt. We may be skeptical about that which others profess to have experienced, and no matter how much faith we have in the conclusions of logic, there are times when we are very slow to accept them as authoritative. But we are always very certain about the things that we ourselves experience. Therefore, if we build the essentials of our religious faith upon the foundations of experience neither the force of the skeptic's logic, or the doubts that arise concerning non-essentials can weaken our faith.

Personally—and in this matter no one can speak in a general way, for we cannot know authoritatively

about the experience of others, nor of the creeds that they have built from their experience. But for himself each man may speak with great assurance concerning his own experience—personally, I am very certain of some things; not because I have been brought to them by logic, but because my life made certain demands and I have found that these things supplied that demand. These things of which I am certain supply the foundation of my religious faith; they constitute my creed. My creed is not unlike that of thousands of others, it is, nevertheless, my own for it is born out of my own experience.

First. *I Believe in God.* No man can be argued to God, for God transcends logic. Certain philosophic arguments may help one to see their need of God and do something to lead them toward Him. Theistic philosophy has its place, but it is not saving the world. I believe the arguments of Theism, largely, because they bear out that which I have already discovered in my experience.

I believe in God because I feel a very great need of Him. There is nowhere for me to rest either mind or soul without God. Mentally I battle with the problems of the universe and grow very tired of the battle, I seem to be getting nowhere. Then I posit God as the answer to all these problems, such as the problems of creation, of life and growth. I do not understand the how of many of these things, that comes little by little through a hard mental struggle, much of it I will never understand here, but meanwhile I rest in the assurance that *it is so*, for some way God is very satisfying as a final explanation and in Him I can mentally rest.

Without God I find no rest for my soul. The pain and sorrow, the weight of sin, the great struggle in

a Godless world would all be too heavy a load to bear. My soul grows sick and tired, I must find strength and rest in some higher power; no blind force, no impersonal intellect will satisfy. I can find rest and find strength only in a personal God. I find that above all else I need such a God as the Christian Father-God, and since He supplies the great soul need, *I believe in God*. The atheist may present his arguments, he may show, after his fashion, that there is no need for a God in the world, and he may demonstrate by faultless logic, if he can, that there is no God. The agnostic may prove to me, as far as argument can prove, that if there is a God I cannot know Him, but I will still say that I believe in God. For I have felt the overwhelming need of Him and have found that He supplies that need. Therefore upon the authority of my own experience, all else notwithstanding, I believe in God.

I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in Him because I must have Him that I may have God, and I must have God to live. John spoke truly when he said, "No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father He hath revealed Him unto us." When we stop to think we realize that the only God we know is the God that Christ revealed to us. The God that I need is not the God of the Hebrews, but the God of Christ. Take away Christ and you rob me of God; give me Christ and in the truest sense I possess God. I need a mediator to reveal God to me, and Christ fills that need, I, therefore, believe in Christ. The skeptic may bring every argument that he can conceive to prove that Christ is not what the Christians think Him to be. If they can they may show me that the records of His life are not authentic.

they may make Him out to be no more than man, and bring forth their metaphysics to prove that as a divine revelation of God He was impossible. I may be unable to answer their arguments, but I will still say that I believe in Christ, the divine Christ who is a revelation of God. For I have felt a supreme need of Him and have found in experience that He alone supplies that need.

I believe in the Bible. No literary or other argument could ever bring me to the place where I would have so implicit a faith in the Bible, as a book containing divine revelation, that it could not be destroyed, or at least greatly weakened by the fire from the guns of the skeptics. I defy any skeptic to weaken my faith in the Bible to-day. Let them do their utmost to destroy it, let them attempt to prove whatever they wish as far as my own faith is concerned. Let them bring argument, unanswerable other than from experience, to prove that it is no more divine revelation than the dramas of Shakespeare; let them expose it as a legend or mythology, and I will yet say with great assurance I believe in the Bible as the book that contains God's revelation to men. I need the record that will bring me to Jesus Christ, and will show the manner in which God has been revealing Himself through the ages; and without the record of the final revelation that came through Christ I would not know either the Father or the Son. I must have this record, and the Bible gives it to me. Thus I find that the Bible, and the Bible alone, fills a vital need of my life. Therefore, in spite of any possible mistakes in the Scriptures or any weakness that may be found in its revelation, I know its worth from experience and affirm my belief in the Bible.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins. The objections that have been raised by some who base their religious faith upon their metaphysics, against evangelical Christianity are aimed chiefly against the doctrine of forgiveness of sin. No man, however, who knows what it means to have pardon from his sins and the life of God again in his soul will need any metaphysical argument to prove to him that a man's sins can be forgiven.

There is no one but has felt that which the psalmist did when he cried, "Who shall deliver me from this bond of death?" And there are thousands that can testify as did the psalmist, "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles." Were all logic and every system of philosophy contrary, I would still believe in the forgiveness of sin, for I have sinned and felt keenly the need of forgiveness and then I have *known* what it meant to have my sins forgiven. Therefore I am certain, there can be no doubt—I believe in the forgiveness of sin.

I believe in the efficacy of prayer. I know very little of the philosophy of prayer. I know of no argument that will lead a man to pray. I have not been able to answer many of the objections that have been raised against prayer. But this I do know, that when I do not pray I have no spiritual life, when I neglect my prayer life, I drift away from God. I may attend church and listen to sermons, I may read my Bible and do good to my fellow-men, and yet I find myself constantly drifting farther away from God. When I pray I live spiritually, I feel the presence of God, I am more efficient in my labors for Him.

I am in the valley of the shadow, sorrow weighs heavy upon my heart, I am tired and discouraged, I

read the promises of comfort and seek for succor everywhere, but I do not pray. I find that the sorrow continually weighs heavier and the discouragement leads to despair. I pray, and behold peace comes and relieves the pain of the sorrow, and the Father through the channel of prayer, sends courage to give victory over the discouragement. We pray because we instinctively feel the need of what prayer gives us. No man can convince me that there is no efficacy in prayer, for I **know** that there is.

I believe in the Resurrection of the dead. I am familiar with most of the arguments for immortality, and I am not sure that, if there was nothing more, they would convince me that there was life beyond the grave. I am quite certain that I would not be sure that I would live eternally because there is life in the apparently dead cocoon. Nor am I sure that I would be without doubt of immortality because Christ rose from the tomb. These and other arguments may be satisfying to some, but I doubt if they would be to me if I had no other assurance. I believe them because they confirm that which I already feel sure about.

The great question of all people has been, "If a man die shall he live again?" And the heart of man has always craved an affirmative answer. The heart of man questions: "If a man die will he live again as himself, or will his life take on some other form or be lost in the life of the infinite." Again the heart craves for the answer. If a man die he will live again as *himself*; personality is eternal. Our hearts question, "when we step from this life into that other will our friends be familiar to us?" And with the longing comes the desire for the assurance that we will know our loved ones in that broader life. Because our hearts so long for this as-

surance, and because the Christian revelation concerning these matters is so satisfactory to our hungry hearts I am very certain that the Christian revelation in this regard is true. Therefore, because this assurance satisfies so well the longing of the soul I believe that if a man die he will live again as himself and that we will know each other in that life.

Thus for myself, from my own experience I have built this creed:

I believe in God.

I believe in Jesus Christ.

I believe in the Bible.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

I believe in the efficacy of prayer.

I believe in eternal life.

Do not build your faith upon the sands of the things of which you are uncertain, for the winds of doubt and skepticism will blow and the house will fall. Rather build your faith upon the rock of your own experience, of the things of which you are certain, and no power in earth or hell can overthrow it.

THE VICTORIOUS KINGDOM

No man can be sure of the future of the Kingdoms of this earth. Those that are strong to-day may be weak to-morrow. The nation that to-day is flushed with victory, to-morrow may be humiliated in defeat. Men sacrifice themselves for a human cause in confidence that it will ultimately conquer, only to see it meet ignominious defeat. At best no kingdom of earth is permanently victorious; a nation becomes strong and takes the front rank among nations only to be overthrown in the changing order. We have a record of the rise and also the fall of the Roman Empire. Greece and Athens were among chief of cities of their time, Constantinople was once the seat of a mighty and victorious empire, but to-day their glory is in the dust. In the centuries that are to come our posterity will read of "The Rise and Fall" of the British Kingdom and of the American Republic; it is **inevitable in the changing order**. Kingdoms of the world are not eternal, they come and go, they rise and fall.

The Kingdom of Heaven is different; when other kingdoms wane and the day of their glory is past the Kingdom of Heaven will be reigning supreme. The kingdoms of earth rise to their zenith and then sink to oblivion, but the Kingdom of Heaven requires eternity to attain its zenith and it *cannot* be defeated. Those who fight under the banner of the cross are battling for a winning cause where there can be no doubt as to the ultimate outcome.

The conflict between the Kingdom of Heaven and the powers of evil is a conflict which takes place on this earth, and the victories of The Kingdom will be part

of the programme of this life as well as of the life to come. Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in *earth* as it is in Heaven." John, on Patmos, saw a vision of "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven." All this teaches us to expect to see the victory of The Kingdom in this world.

There are those who think that they read in prophecy that The Kingdom of Christ will decline rather than advance in the earth. I am not greatly interested in any one's interpretation of prophecy, so called, for I am inclined to believe that it is not for us "to know the times and the seasons." I believe that experience will bear me out in this; for if God's plan is to reveal the future to men He would certainly make it plain enough that at least two scholars might agree as to its meaning. As it is, no two who are original in their research reach a like conclusion concerning the divine plan for the future. I am, therefore, distrustful of the divine origin of any system of, so called, prophecy. And I emphatically disagree with the theory that the desired end will have been reached, and that Christ will take up a triumphant reign when the world has grown much worse. If, however, I did believe that this was the divine plan I would withdraw from the church and connect myself with some gambling, whiskey or libertine enterprise that I might do my part toward bringing in the reign of Christ.

It is a sick faith that believes that The Kingdom of Christ is waning in the earth, and a sadly distorted vision that makes the gospel successful by failing in the accomplishment of that which it teaches should be brought to pass.

There have always been a multitude of religious pessi-

mists that have insisted that the world was constantly growing worse and that faith was on the decline. To some folk the golden age is always in the past. Some time ago I discovered a book that was published in the year 1856, the year of that wonderful religious awakening that has marked a mighty spiritual advance in this country. This book, written in the midst of this great awakening, contained a great wail of pessimism, "the world is growing worse and worse," said the author, "Oh, for the faith of our fathers!" The religious pessimist to-day cries that the world is getting worse, "Oh, for the spirit of 1856!"

The author of the book of Ecclesiastes spoke as if to this class of churchmen when he said, "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou hast not enquired wisely concerning this."

No one who is familiar with history can believe that the world is constantly growing worse. Surely the world's governments are better than they were when men believed in the divine right of kings. To-day the most unenlightened nation in the world grants more liberty and listens more to the voice of the people than did the most enlightened nations not many centuries ago. There has not been a period in the world's history when the great body of the people were as largely educated as they are at the present time.

The world is certainly progressing morally. The facts concerning the morals of Greece and Rome in their palmyest days, the stories of the sanctioned immoralities of the courts of the greatest monarchs of the earth and often of the Papal court itself are too indecent for publication. Although there are frightful moral lapses in high places to-day these immoralities are not sanctioned social practices of the highest tribunals of the earth.

It is true that the world is full of social and economic injustice, but a careful study of conditions of the past will show us that the conditions of the present are superior to those of almost any other period. In the past the world was asleep to the great social injustices, there was no voice raised against them, but now we are doing our utmost to expunge them from the earth.

There never was a time more promising in its outlook for religious liberty. The religious pessimist should read again of the crimes of the Dark Ages and remember that they were committed in the name of religion, they should remember that in times past it was a common practice to send men to the rack and torture them in a way that we would not dare to torture any man for the most despicable of crimes to-day, to compel them to conform to the tyrannical demands of the church. This is the first age when we can see the dawn of real religious liberty. We cannot read history and deny that the world is growing better.

We err in thinking that the world is growing more wicked because our vision is too limited. I had in my parish at one time a man nearly eighty years old who had never been fifty miles away from his birthplace. I often talked with him of other parts of the country, and I found that he judged every other place by the part of country where he had spent his life. I spent a week in camp along a mountain stream, which ran through a gully, the mountains rising abruptly on both sides, and the only view that we had was of these towering hills that rose immediately from the banks of the stream. Before the week was ended I some way felt that the world had grown very small, and I am sure that had I spent a few years living there between those hills my conception of much in the outer world would

have become as narrow as that valley. If I had been born there and lived there always I would have felt that all the world was as circumscribed.

In our religious outlook we are apt to judge the world by our own community, and the advancement of The Kingdom by the advancement of our local church organization. We are too much inclined to think of the past by the things that we can remember rather than by the records of history. We need to climb to the top of the mount and take a survey of the whole country. If you will do this you will be surprised to see the progress that we have made. We should look back over the span of the whole Christian era, and then should scrutinize the work on the mission fields, and study the practical effect of the gospel on society that we may realize just how far we have come.

It may be that in many ways the organic church is losing but we should consider how the spirit of brotherhood and the spirit of service is leavening the whole lump of society. Nations are being brought closer together, and the day of which the angels sang on the first Christmas morning, when there would be "Peace on earth and good will among men" is nearer at hand than it has ever been before. Surely this is the spirit of the Christ at work in the world.

I recognize the fact that we are losing some battles; many who pretend to be working for the world's betterment are selfish in their motives; the church is losing because of its materialistic spirit. I know that many in high places in the earth are unjust, that the strong still oppress the weak, and men still live very much for themselves; the millennium is not here, but it is coming. Where we are losing in some things we are gaining in others.

Some churchmen are telling us that we are not having the revivals that we used to have, and that folk are not as zealous in their religious life as they were in the days of our fathers. I am afraid that much of what they say is true, the church must suffer for its sins. But that does not mean that the spirit of Christ is not advancing in the world. Things looked very dark within the church before the advent of the great German monk, Martin Luther. The church was far from being spiritually alive when the Wesleys organized the Holy Club at Oxford. But the terrible spiritual darkness of those days was in reality birth pains, and from that travail was born the movements that so mightily advanced The Kingdom in the earth. It seems now that there will be, in the not far distant future, a new movement toward a more vital religious life that will make the church a greater spiritual power than it has ever been.

All of the change in the church is not a sign of retrograde, much of it is an evidence of growth. Growth always means change, stagnation is death. Those who are constantly crying for "the good old days" forget that the world moves forward, and that everything that grows changes form. Tennyson put a great truth into the mouth of King Arthur, when, after "that last weird battle of the west," the great king was drifting, in the barge with the three queens, out to sea. And Sir Bedivere, crying out because the round table, that was "an image of a mighty world" was to be no more; then Arthur made answer from the barge,

"The old order changeth, yielding place to the new,
God fulfills Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

A custom that was good in its day and met the demands of its time may be very ineffective now because it is out of harmony with the changed order. Moreover, those who are always seeking opportunity to ply an evil trade learn how they can corrupt a custom that was an instrument of righteousness in times past. So that that which yesterday was a power for good may to-day be a tool for knaves. That which in the days that are gone was an instrument by which the world was made better is now used to corrupt it. God, however, is not bound by one form in His work. He has more than one instrument by which He can accomplish His ends. When the old becomes ineffective He ordains the use of the new. Because we saw God in the old order does not signify that He is not also working through the new. "The old order changeth giving place to new—God fulfills Himself in many ways."

There is no enemy strong enough to defeat the Kingdom of Christ. We may lose battles, we may have many traitors in our camp, thousands may grow weary and desert, we may fight well with one implement of warfare to-day only to find it ineffective to-morrow, so we must drop it as a relic of the old order and take a new and more effective weapon, but always the Kingdom of Christ is moving on to victory. *It will win; it cannot fail.*

As the Kingdom of Christ will ultimately be victorious in the world, it will be victorious over the world in the heart of every individual who will in a true sense become a citizen. It will give victory over the sorrows of the world, over the failure and disappointments of earth, over the sins that so constantly beset us.

Paul was not a thoughtless optimist when he said, "All things work together for good to them that love

God." This is the divine philosophy of Christ's Kingdom. Man may lose in the things of the world, and if he is not a citizen of The Kingdom the loss to him will be defeat, but if he does have citizenship in The Kingdom, by the plan of the Infinite the loss is turned into victory. A man may lose his money and absolutely fail in business and when it is all over find that he has received great spiritual blessing through the loss. As the spiritual is worth infinitely more than the material he gains in the loss.

To the one without the Christian hope, sorrow can bring nothing but despair. I cannot see how those out of the Kingdom of Christ could say that their sorrow was gain, but the divine law is such that, to the Christian, out of the travail of great sorrow is born great spiritual light and life that shall mean much as infinite riches, not only to the one that knew the sorrow, but to the world as it is benefited by the character that comes as the outgrowth of the refining power of sorrow.

In many ways success in this life means a failure in the spiritual. Many a man has lost his vision of God because he became rich and powerful, because he succeeded too well in temporal things. Failure in the realm of the temporal very often means success in the spiritual.

There is a peculiar depth of truth in that great hymn of Dr. Matheson, the blind Scotch preacher, especially when we understand that it was written after disappointment in love. Out of the failure of his love and from the great affliction of his blindness he was inspired to write,

"O, Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean's depths its flow
May richer, fuller, be.

O, Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be."

That which seems failure, and that which is failure in the eyes of the world, by the law of divine compensation is turned into victory for those who are citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

If one succeeds in the spiritual he cannot fail, for that which is ultimately worth while is not that which will pass away but that which remains, not the things that are temporal but the things that are eternal.

The late Dr. Borden Parker Bowne in his last public address, speaking to a body of theological students, said: "We are going to be through this life before very long. The longest life is short when it is over; any time is short when it is done. The gates of time will swing to behind you before long. They will swing to behind some of us soon, but behind all of us before long. And then the important thing will not be what rank we held, or anything of that sort—not what men thought of us, but what He thought of us, and whether we were built into His Kingdom. And if, at the end of it all, we emerge from life's work and discipline, crowned souls, at home anywhere in God's universe, life will be a success."

If he had been talking to business men, instead of theological students, he would have said, "The great question will not be how much money you have made or have you been a business success? or if it had been to the politician, the great question will not be what offices have you held, or did you receive the applause

of the multitude." For these that, in the estimate of the world are the most to be desired are not the things that in the end constitute the true success in life. Real success has to do with that which is infinitely higher.

Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." And if we know God and Christ, no matter how we may fail in the things that belong to the temporal life, we will not have failed, for we will have succeeded in the life which is found through the Kingdom that cannot fail, the Kingdom that is within you.

Christ's Kingdom brings victory to every citizen, it will not fail in the earth for it is The Kingdom *victorious*. God speed the day when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess," and "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."



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